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THE OÖLOGIST 8

FOR THE STUDENT OF

BIRDS, THEIR NESTS AND EGGS

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VOLUME XXIV

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ALBION, N. Y.  
FRANK H. LATTIN, M. D. PUBLISHER  
ERNEST H. SHORT, EDITOR AND MANAGER

1907

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION DEVOTED TO  
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXIDERMV.

## WANTS, FOR SALES AND EXCHANGES,

Brief Special announcements "Wants," "Exchanges," "For Sales," inserted in this department for 25 cents per 25 words. Notices over 25 words charged at the rate of 1-2 cent for each additional word. No notice inserted for less than 25 cents. Terms, cash with order. Strictly first-class specimens will be accepted in payment at 1-3 list rates.

VOL. XXIV. No. 1.

ALBION, N. Y., JAN., 1907.

WHOLE No. 234

## Take Notice.

Examine the number following your name on the wrapper of this month's Oölogist. It denotes when your subscription expired or will expire.

Remember we must be notified if you wish paper discontinued and all arrearages must be paid.

209 your subscription expired Dec. 1904  
234 your subscription expires with this issue  
245 " " " " Dec., 1907  
257 " " " " Dec., 1908

Intermediate numbers can easily be determined. If we have you credited wrong we wish to rectify.

Entered as second-class matter December 21, 1903, at the post office at Albion, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

FOR SALE.—Unmounted photographs and slides of Audubon's home and vicinity, on the Perkiomen Creek, Pa. Will exchange for eggs in sets. Nov. 2. t. THOMAS H. JACKSON, 343 E. Biddle St., West Chester, Pa.

WANTED.—In exchange following species eggs in fine sets. Will give exchange in rarer species. A. O. U. 261, 414a, 469, 468, 554b, 588, 610a, 611a, 622e, 627, 648a, 654, 667, 680, 681e, 721b, 725b, 725c, 743, 753, 761b. THOMAS H. JACKSON, 343 E. Biddle St., West Chester, Pa. N. 4. t.

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WANTED.—A 1 sets of 28, 67, 118, 196, 203, 211a and c, 277, 277a, 517, 529, 540, 567, 567e, 597, 597a, 724. These are not rare and I am sure YOU can spare some of them. Also for selection 332, 339, 343, 360, 360a, 417, 420. I always want Warblers. Let me hear from you. A. E. PRICE, Grant Park, Ill.

WE HAVE fans, jacobins, pouters and Tumbler Pigeons for sale, or exchange for gun, kodak, canaries, Minorca chickens, rose bushes, music cabinet, guitar, or revolver. CLINTON PIGEON LOFTS, Clinton, Mo.

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INDIAN arrow heads, mortars, pitted stones, rub stones and broken pottery from mounds. Old newspapers Mexican war, etc., for cash or exchange. What have you. W. P. AGEE, Hope, Ark., Sept. 8, t.

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**WANTED.**—To sell fine collection of bird eggs for cash or exchange for Indian relics, fossils, coins and other curios. Write your wants and offers. L. E. HOWSLEY, Orofino, Idaho.

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## THE OOLOGIST.

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**WANTED**—Brown, White or Buff Leghorn, Black Minorca or Hamburg Fowls. Can use two cocks and fifty hens, pure bred or good grades. Will give in exchange anything in stock, minerals, shells, corals, birds' eggs, showy butterflies, Indian relics, curios, stamps, and a few mounted birds and skins. ERNEST H. SHORT, Box 173 Rochester, N. Y.

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Eaton, Colo.

My Dear Short:—Just received my Oologist and see that you have inserted my ad. a second time. This is rather unfortunate. I foresee another deluge of orders and there isn't an egg in the house. Will you please cut it out as everything was sold long ago. Yours truly, Thompson.

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 1.

ALBION, N. Y., JAN., 1907.

WHOLE No. 234

## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OÖLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-  
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

Correspondence and items of interest to the student of Birds, their Nests and Eggs, solicited from all.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,  
Chill, Monroe Co., N. Y.

### Nesting of the Broad-winged Hawk.

On May 12, 1906, a friend and myself started out to hunt hawks' nests, having especially in view the Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned, though it was a little early for the latter. It

was a beautiful day of our month of blossoms and we both were happy that we were able to be in the country on such a day, whether we found any hawk's nests or not. After driving about four miles we hitched the horse near the road and proceeded to explore a considerable growth of chestnut woods. We had looked through the entire lot without result, when just as I was coming to the edge, I saw a large opening, about 15 feet up, in an ancient chestnut. I thumped on the tree with a climber when out flew a Barred Owl. She flew to a tree a short distance away, lit on a limb, then did the "Right about face," mentioned long ago by Mr. C. L. Rawson, and sat there for some time watching me. I put on my climbers and went up the tree. In the cavity were two downy white young, perhaps six or seven days old. Even though so young, they could make a noticeable click with their black bills. I sincerely hope that nothing happened to them and that they are now as big as their mother and are enjoying life.

About a mile further on, I looked into the nest of a Redshouldered Hawk, which contained two eggs, well incubated, I should judge by their appearance.

Proceeding on about three miles we came to a large tract of woods, principally pine. Here we began a careful and systematic search, for a pair of Broad-wings were known to have raised young here in 1905. After some time I saw, about 40 feet up in a pine, a nest that looked fresh. Up-



NEST AND EGGS OF SWAINSON'S WARBLER IN SITU.

Photographed by Dr. Cleckley in Pluinziz's Swamp near Augusta, Ga.,  
June 1st, 1906.

on leveling my opera glasses upon it, I could see feathers sticking to some of the twigs of the nest. Everybody who has hunted hawks' nests knows that this is a sure sign of occupancy and it was in this case. The female was on the nest and flew off when I had climbed about ten feet. She was very tame. She lit in the top of another tree not over 20 yards away and sat there much of the time I was in the tree. Her plaintive calls, so different from the harsh screams of most hawks, soon brought her mate. He was noticeably smaller and his cry was much more metallic and keener than hers. He was also quite fearless. At no time did either of them make any hostile demonstrations. As this was the first nest of the species I had ever found, I decided to take the eggs. When I got to the nest I found two eggs in it. These I took, and as we doubted if the set was complete, I left in their place two hen's eggs, one boiled, the other uncooked.

On May 18 we visited the nest again. The hawk flew off as I started up the tree. In the nest I found the two hens' eggs and one more egg of the hawk. This I took, leaving the two hens' eggs. On May 26 I visited the nest again and found the faithful bird still busily incubating the two hens' eggs. These I took and the birds must have then abandoned the nest, as when I went a fourth time no sign of them was to be found.

The nest was built in a strong crotch. It was composed almost entirely of dead pine twigs and the only lining was about two handfuls of pine bark in scales of from half an inch to two inches long. One of the eggs was very heavily blotched with reddish brown, another was entirely covered over the entire surface with fine markings, while the third was rather sparsely blotched. They meas-

ure in inches: 1.94 x 1.53; 1.95 x 1.53; 1.93 x 1.52.

There are several subjects for speculation that arise out of this experience. First, it would seem as if color means nothing to birds, as in this instance their own eggs were heavily marked while the hens' eggs were of course white. As a further evidence of this the writer well remembers that when he was a boy of about ten, there was an old turkey hen at home which sat for weeks, until there was nothing left of her but skin, bones and feathers, on a white door knob and a piece of dry horse manure.

Second, the nest instead of accumulating more feathers as time went on, seemed to contain fewer each visit I made to it. This would seem as if the feathers on hawks' nests might not always get there by simply rubbing off as the nest is used longer. There were many more feathers about the nest at the time of my first visit than at my last one.

Third, the generally accepted theory, that each successive egg laid by a bird will be less highly colored than its predecessor, seems to be again confirmed. Although Mr. Watson Bishop proved that it will not always hold true in the case of the Canada Grouse, yet in this case the last egg laid was very much more sparsely marked than either of the others and of the first two, one had received very much more pigment than the other.

B. G. WILLARD,  
 , Millis, Mass.

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#### More About the Bittern's Note.

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Mr. Reinecke's description of the manner in which the American Bittern produces his "pumping" or "stake driving" noise in the September Oologist, does not agree with my experience at all.

## The Mourning Dove.



NEST AND 3 EGGS OF MOURNING DOVE.

Now in the collection of K. B. Mathes,  
Batavia, N. Y.

Several times I have been very close to one when he was pumping and I once stood within 15 feet of one where I plainly saw him, before, while he was in the act and after the "pumping." This bird was standing among the cat-tails in the water in a marsh, his neck and bill pointing nearly straight up. The pumping began with two or three low short notes which sounded much like water flowing from a jug (Gu-Gu-Gu)). These notes cannot be heard unless one is quite close. Then came Gung-Gee-Gee-um, the accent on the second syllable. This is repeated three or four times and is loud and resonant and as Mr. Reinecke says, can be heard nearly one-half mile away. That the noise is produced from the throat I am very positive as I could plainly see the head and neck moving and the vibration of the feathers on the neck. Let us hear from others on this subject.

VERDI BURTCH.

In the mountains of Virginia the Mourning Dove is a constant breeder seven months in the year. Although it breeds more abundantly among the mountains, it is not at all uncommon throughout the pine regions to the seashore.

Its first appearance in my locality this year was March 9, when on walking through a field of broomsedge and pine bushes, three flew up at different intervals; but on several previous years they have appeared during the latter part of February. The earliest breeding period commences about April 10, and although several of my books record nests taken in March, and one of them, even in February; the earliest date I myself record is April 18, when a nest of two fresh eggs was found on the top of a stump six feet high in the midst of a dense woods.

In the mountains of Albemarle county the Mourning Dove breeds in colonies among the young pines, many of which are interlaced with grape vines, and bordering on the sloping hillside of a small stream. In one particular spot there is not a time from May to September that several nests are not in course of construction or incubation going on. The greatest breeding season of the year is during July, when as many as twenty nests may be found in every stage from those only partly constructed to those containing young birds able to fly. None of these nests were over 20 feet in height, the average being 16 feet, and the most of them were placed out on the end of the lower limbs, while a few were in the very top of the tree, and many of them were so loosely constructed that they could easily be seen through. The lowest nesting site I ever saw was

in this locality in a small cedar bush only a few feet away from the stream. This was July 8, '04 when I discovered two slightly incubated eggs on a platform of sheddings from the cedar which had lodged in the crotch of several limbs ten inches above the ground, the cedar itself only being about four feet high. There was no nest at all only about a dozen twigs scattered about to keep the eggs from rolling.

While walking through the woods in Chesterfield county, May 2d, last, I found a nest on a branch of a dogwood tree 15 feet up, containing two nearly incubated eggs. The nest was the most compact and well built I have ever seen, being made of moss leaves and fine grass and lined with feathers.

On another occasion, June 5, I was passing along the border of a woods and seeing a small nest on the end of a pine branch about 35 feet up, was induced to climb to it. It was not till I got to the limb itself that a dove flew off leaving two half-grown birds.

The number of eggs laid is almost invariably two, but upon several occasions I have found nests containing one nearly incubated egg, but could not tell positively whether there had not been a second egg, which might have been destroyed. On two occasions I found nests containing three birds each, but it was not till July 24, '05 that I found a nest of three eggs which I believe were a set, the size and shape being about the same.

THOMAS SEMMES, Jr.,  
Richmond, Virginia.

[Sets of three eggs are very rare. We give half-tone in this number of a set of 3 with nest found by J. Ritenbergh in an apple tree in the township of Gaines, N. Y., several years ago. While it is customary for most doves to colonize while breeding, the

Mourning Dove does not usually do so and Mr. Semmes' observations along this line will interest many.—Ed.]

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#### Notes from Idaho.

Bird Life here is not much on the boom. Snowy Owl is beginning to drift in from the far north, many specimens having been seen lately. The Great and Western Horned as well as the ever present Rocky Mountain Screech Owl is becoming quite common as the winter grows in severity, using the valley as a harbor during the intense cold of the higher altitudes.

The villainous Magpie, Canyon, Rock, and Western House Wren, Long-crested Jay, and "Whiskey Jack," are much in evidence. Snow crowns all the mountains surrounding us, while vegetation continues to grow in our valley. Many ducks and geese and not uncommonly a swan stop to rest on the beautiful Clearwater, the favorite stream of Maj. Bendire's "hunting" ground, which splits the rugged mountains in twain, forming the well-known Clearwater Valley.

Up the canyons leading to the higher peaks, may yet be found many interesting species of ferns, while moss and fungi of all descriptions seem to attain the most rank growth during winter. While it is snowing in the mountains, a gentle rain is falling here, keeping vegetation growing.

Both fresh water and land shells are scarce here, the cold spring and snow water seemingly a detriment in some manner. I have not made a special study of the cause but surmise that the mineral properties peculiar to waters of this section may be the principal reason. I am completing a list of hepidoptera of this valley and will send it when finished.

Very respectfully,

D. B. HOWSLEY.

## AN ISLAND OBLITERATED.

**Swept by Gulf Storm—One of the Audubon Bird Reservations Was Drowned by the Sea—Another Island Nearby Is Also Under Water.**

(Publishers' Press.)

New Orleans, Dec. 18.—It was announced by the officials of the Audubon Society that Grand Cochere island, 100 acres in area, one of the society's bird reservations in the Gulf of Mexico and the place where the daughter of Thomas Taggart lost her life several years ago, was swept into the sea by the hurricane last September. F. M. Miller, president of the society, and four trappers recently made an excursion to the reservation and found Bremerton island, another of the group, under water. They also found thousands of Pelicans with broken wings in a dying condition.

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## The Carolina Rail.

Previous to the location of the great Lackawanna Steel Plant at Stony Point, then a part of the Buffalo park system, the greater part being a large swamp, occupied by the Florida Gallinule, Green Heron, Least Bittern, Virginia Rail, Wilson Snipe, Sanderling, Plover, Red-shouldered Black-birds and a great many rare warblers, it was quite a treat for an observing Oologist to go over this ground, where fiery furnaces and rolling machines shape the iron ore into rails—a seething caldron of industry.

Now we have to go considerably further to watch the denizens of the swamp.

The Carolina Rail arrives from the southern salt marshes about the first of May and full complements of eggs can be found from May 22d to June 3d, these sets varying from 8 to 12.

The accompanying picture of the

nest taken May 27th, contained 16 eggs. It was impossible to show the 16 eggs as some were laying on top of others.

We know of several finds of 21 and 22 eggs in one nest.

The nests are easy to discover. Coming near a nest the bird will raise from nest, fly a short distance and drop in marsh as if shot. Where the bird flew up is a sure sign of the location of the nest.

We have taken several sets where one egg was as large as that of a Ring Rail. But this happens more frequently with the Virginia Rail.

The Rails in our locality are hardly ever shot, as they are in the salt marshes and are therefore quite in abundance. I know of a high place in the swamp, where a wood chopper's camp had been broken up, and I counted in a very small area, 82 nests.

It is quite interesting to watch the young Rail, how easily they skip over the boggy swamp, looking more like woolly balls than anything else. They disappear at the slightest noise.

The nest is a deep cup-shaped construction of heavy swamp grasses from the previous year, lined with finer grasses.

Towards fall they migrate from here to the south to return to us the following spring.

ED. REINECKE,  
400 Elm St., Buffalo, N. Y.

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## The Cerulean Warbler.

The Cerulean Warbler was unusually scarce here in Wayne county, during the season of 1906, and even while the migration was at its height not more than three birds were noted to ten last year. Two males were secured on May 6; these were the first of the season and all seen on that date. Six, on May 20th, was the

greatest number seen on any one day and this in a locality where thirty were observed May 21, 1905. I also discovered that the two pieces of timber, where all the previously described nests were found, had been cut down last winter and the scarcity of birds combined with the necessity of looking up new territory rendered the prospect of nest finding most discouraging, but I determined to try for them and was rewarded by three nests.

Nest 12, May 20, 1906—While Warbler hunting in a thick piece of woods on P. C. 31, Ecorse Township, I detected a female Cerulean stripping fine pieces of fibrous bark from a grape vine that clung to a tall elm. She flew directly to the nest, some 50 yards away, and after arranging the material, returned to the vine and climbed up and down the elm beside it until a suitable bit of material was detected. She worked rapidly and by my watch, it required only six minutes to select and gather the material, arrange it in the nest and make the trip to and from the vine. The nest was on the horizontal fork of a small elm branch 30 feet above the ground and unlike all previous sites the branch was entirely dead. I returned June 3rd, but a severe wind storm had snapped off the branch close to tree trunk. It lodged in a lower branch with the nest intact but bottom side up. Nothing was seen or heard of the birds, and I believe they abandoned the locality.

Nest 13, June 3, 1906.—The nest was placed on the horizontal fork of a white oak limb eight feet from the main trunk and 15 above the ground in rather open woods but with dense second growth. I nearly missed it as it was surrounded and concealed by the tops of the second growth. The female was covering four incubated eggs and was very tame. The

locality was P. C. 66, Ecorse Township.

Nest 14, June 6, 1906—The nest was placed on the horizontal fork of a white oak limb seven feet from the tree trunk and about 40 above the ground in open woods, but with dense bush growth. The tail of the female could be plainly seen from the ground. Four incubated eggs were in the nest and the locality was P. C. 239, Gratiot Township.

J. CLAIRE WOOD,

Detroit, Mich.

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Immaculate Sets of the Long-billed  
Marsh Wren.

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In Mr. R. F. Miller's excellent paper on the Long-billed Marsh Wren in the September Oologist, he speaks of having never met with a perfectly immaculate set. It has been my good fortune to find several. The last, a set of four, was secured June 3rd or 6th, 1902 in Ecorse Township. These were also abnormal in shape, having somewhat the contour of a lima bean. They are now in the collection of J. Warren Jacobs, Jr. I mention an immaculate set in the Oologist for February, 1892, on page 40.

The absence of pigment in a wren appears to indicate physical detriment, as immaculate sets are usually infertile. An exception is a beautiful set of six taken by my brother on the St. Clair Flats. These were all in a healthy state of incubation. He also took a unique set of five of the common chocolate type, but three of the eggs are marked with irregular oriole like scrawls of black.

J. CLAIRE WOOD,

Detroit, Mich.

Toledo, O., Dec. 17, 1906.

Mr. Ernest H. Short, Rochester, N. Y.

Dear Sir:—I wish to report to you the capture of an English Blackbird, *Merula Merula*, at Toledo, O., on Nov. 3, by myself. It had been around our yard all summer and fall. In size and shape it closely resembled a robin, but was a jet black in color, with a bright yellow bill and ring about the eye. In habits it also closely resembles the robin. The bird was sent to Ann Arbor to be identified, and there they were of the opinion that it was *Merula merula*, but sent it to Washington for further identification.

Yours truly,

A. C. READ.

Are our birds really growing fewer? If so, what ones and to what extent? If you have notes let us hear from you.

Observers this coming season please note carefully:

1st. What species, if any, seems to be fewer or missing?

2d. Is there an apparent reason? What is it?

3d. Does any bird seem to be decidedly increasing in numbers in your locality? Any apparent reason?

Let us hear from a number of careful observers any time in 1907.—Editor.

#### EDITORIAL.

With the appearance on our table of the last number of the "Warbler" comes the confirmation of the rumor that had previously reached us, that it is to be permanently discontinued.

Mr. Childs frankly announces that this is on account of the lack of financial appreciation. We are sorry but not surprised.

All class publications of this nature are complaining and we have troubles of our own.

Personally, the editor feels a bit pessimistic in regard to that set of three Carolina Paroquet collected in Florida by Dr. Pendry in 1896.

We would dislike to shatter such a prize but ? ? ? Well! we expect to meet Mr. Pendry soon and perhaps he can shed some light on the subject.

Through the kindness of Prof. Surface, we have before us a copy of the "Serpents of Pennsylvania." Accurate, written in an interesting but not too scientific manner, the work is a valuable addition to the available literature on these reptiles so little understood by the masses. The illustrations are fine and the whole work is worthy of a much better and more durable binding. Being a state publication, we suppose it will be difficult to secure outside of Pennsylvania.

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Birds' Eggs for Cash, either in large or small lots, sets and sets with nests, and large rare singles especially desired. Must be strictly first-class and with data. Send list with lowest prices. Jan t.f.

DOCTOR M. T. CLECKLEY,  
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**H. T. CLIFTON,** Business Manager,

P. O. Box 404, Pasadena, Cal.

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VOL. XXIV. No. 2.

ALBION, N. Y., FEB., 1907.

WHOLE No. 235

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 2.

ALBION, N. Y., FEB., 1907.

WHOLE No. 235

## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OÖLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-  
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

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During the last summer I visited a small swamp about a mile in length near the center of Chesterfield county. This gave me a good opportunity to study the habits of the White-eyed Vireo and also, to improve my collection by adding several sets which I had heretofore lacked.

The first set I obtained May 3, contained four perfectly fresh eggs. This was the earliest set I record taken in Virginia. The nest was placed in the fork of a twig of a holly-bush 8 inches above the ground, and almost overhanging a small stream. The eggs of this set were much smaller than the average and were rather heavily splotched about the larger end. On May 11, I took another set of four eggs of the average size, and evenly speckled all over. The nest was one of the most artistically constructed I ever saw, also being placed in a forked twig about 15 inches above the ground. The incubation had just begun. Three days later I discovered a third nest suspended from a twig of a small bush two feet from ground. This was in full view of any one passing and only a few feet away from a railroad. It contained four nearly incubated eggs, which were rather lightly marked.

On May 22, I took a fourth set containing four apparently fresh eggs in the same vicinity I got the first set. This was also suspended in a holly bush, but nearly three feet above the

ground. The eggs were the average size and lightly dotted with black. About 14 feet away, on the other side of a stream, I found another nest containing four birds nearly ready to fly; and directly above this nest was a nest of the Yellow Warbler in a maple tree, about 15 feet above the ground, which contained five fresh eggs.

Besides all these, I found two empty nests of recent construction of the White-eyed Vireo in the same swamp and none of these were over three feet from the ground.

Every set I have ever seen taken from my locality contained four eggs, and in only one instance do I record a set of five eggs taken in Virginia.

THOS. SEMMES, JR.,  
Richmond, Va.

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#### Hummingbird Notes.

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I desire to add a few remarks on the Ruby-throated Hummer (*Trochilus Colubris*) to the interesting notes of Mr. Southwick in the July Oologist, and of Mr. Harrower in the August Oologist.

I have found a great many nests of the Ruby-throat, some in maple trees in the village streets, some in apple trees in orchards, some in the depths of Potter Swamp where the trees are thick and large and there are partly submerged logs and hummocks with a rank growth of weeds and ferns, but the favorite nesting site seems to be in the woods on the hillsides on either side of our valley at an elevation of 200 or 300 feet above the level of the creek which flows down the valley.

Mr. C. F. Stone and myself have found as many as five nests in a single afternoon in the woods on the east side of the valley. They are usually situated from 10 to 20 feet

from the ground, but have found them 40 and 60 feet up. We find them in maples, oaks, beech, and hemlock trees. I have a nest that has been used two successive summers, a second story having been added the second season.

The female does not seem to be able to sit still on the eggs as she is continually flying up from the nest and taking short flights of a few seconds duration, remaining on the nest but a moment or two at a time.

VERDI BURTCH.

Branchport, N. Y.

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#### Additional Notes on the Bobolink.

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After reading the articles by Mr. C. S. Prescott on the Bobolink in November issue of *The Oologist* together with the Editor's personal experience with this "Black and White Slough Bird," I can disclose several interesting narratives regarding the nidification of this species.

On the uncultivated meadows, both in dry and wet situations, the skunk black bird abounds, though some times very locally, in regions about Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin. I have observed 25 males in a ten acre field during the month of May, yet I know of no other bird who conceals its nest more effectually in proportion to its abundance. The birds practically nest in Colonies. The territory which they resort to upon arrival from the tropics, seems overflowing with their gushing melody mingled with the flute-like notes of the Meadow Lark and the sweet out pathetic whistle of this dry land wader, the Bartramian Sandpiper.

When the Bobolink is nesting among rank vegetation bordering our marshes, it is extremely difficult to observe the female as she arises from the ground, because of her habit of alighting, or simply hopping to a

weed stalk and then by alternating flights and hops, traveling perhaps 50 yards before giving utterance to any note of alarm.

During damp, cloudy and rainy weather, Madam Spink sits very closely and frequently during the drizzling rain I have walked within a foot or less of her treasures. Occasionally I have actually trod upon the nest and the parent bird, although without injury to the latter.

If the birds have chosen a grassy field where the living vegetation is very short, but last year's growth covers a greater portion of the earth, forming wind beaten masses or tussocks, the nests are often concealed simply by the last year's growth, which is dead and dry, forming excellent shelter.

I have a distinct recollection of the very cold and wet spring and late summer during 1902. The prairie sloughs were almost entirely submerged, with here and there a slight knoll or elevation perhaps not to exceed one-tenth of an acre in extent. The Bobolinks together with the Meadow Larks, Savanna, Grasshoppers and Henslow's Sparrows, had taken refuge in these high places after their first set had been destroyed by the high water. On several of the "rises" in the prairies, of very limited extent, I found no less than ten nests of the Bobolink. They were adeptly hidden under weed stalks, or the luxurious grass which was specially rank like all other verdure during cool, damp weather.

I have also been quite successful in approaching the incubating female during very windy days by walking against the breeze. She seems to permit very close inspection at this time probably due to the fact, that her hearing is not so acute when the grass is disturbed so that it appears to be moving over the surface of the earth in

great waves, caused by the action of our prevailing lake winds.

Regardless of the fact that these nests are a puzzle to the naturalist, our wily Cow-bird often uses the Bobolink's home as a depository for her eggs. I have found one nest containing nine eggs, five belonging to the owner of the nest and the other four laid by a Cow-bird.

When the offspring have hatched, but still occupy the nest, the parents are not so illusive but show greater anxiety without attempting to entice the searcher from their young. I would safely assert that it would be easier to detect three nests full of young after June 13th, than to uncover a set of fresh eggs about the first of the same month.

Last Decoration day my companion found one nest containing the unusual number of seven eggs.

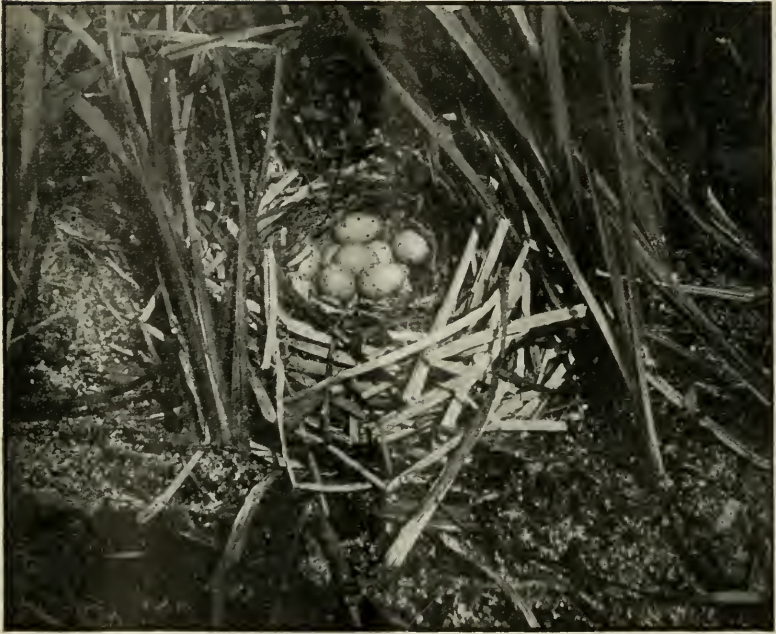
GERARD ALAN ABBOTT,  
Chicago, Illinois.

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#### Another View of the Bobolink.

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The excellent papers regarding the habits of the Bobolink, in recent issues of the Oologist, have aroused my interest to the point where I am fain to record my own observations. Most writers agree that the female is remarkably secretive near its nest and extremely cautious in any movements which would tend to betray the fateful secret. Many observers, moreover, assign to the male a share of this caution, and make him a very suitable partner to his wary spouse. Now, while the writer is free to say that his personal observations of the nesting habits of the Bobolink have not been exhaustive, his experience has been somewhat at variance with the generally accepted accounts. Another view of the Bobolink, therefore, may not be amiss in affording a well-round-



**NEST AND EGGS OF SORA.**

(Photo by Reinecke.)

This was to have appeared with article in last issue, but the article was used in advance by a mistake.

ed history of our voluble friend of the meadow-marsh.

Is the nest really quite difficult to find? One phase of the difficulty lies in the fact that the Bobolink nests in the grass. In its avoidance of any action likely to betray the site, the Bobolink is not more secretive than the Horned Lark in its so-called varieties. The latter will step from its nest when an observer approaches, sometimes when the disturber is thirty or forty feet away, sometimes allowing the observer to approach quite close before leaving the nest. If the Horned Lark, therefore, nested in grass such as the Bobolink frequents, it would be next to an impossibility to

find the nest from the movements of the bird. The Bobolink is not more secretive and cautious than some other birds, but the surroundings of its nest tends to ba e the collector and make the quest more than ordinarily bootless.

In consideration of the bird itself and its own actions, apart from the baffling surroundings, the Bobolink is far less wary and cautious around its nest than the Horned Lark and perhaps other ground-nesting birds. I have watched a Horned Lark spend thirty minutes in getting into its nest, and meanwhile running a quarter of a mile at the least in its maneuvering to mislead the possible observer

of its actions. Judging only from the actions of the birds, the nest of a given pair of Bobolinks is not so difficult for me to determine as one of Killdeers, the latter being more deceptive in misleading the observer, and the former being more apt to betray the neighborhood by their ordinary movements. The foregoing contrast relates to actual observations of the movements of the birds, and not to divers expedients and stratagems for finding the nests. If we are going to be true oologists, aiming to place the science of oology above the plane of criticism it now occupies in the minds of certain individuals, let us find our eggs by closely studying the habits of the birds that the finding of the nests follows as an incidental rather than as the main issue. I for one am not going to hunt for eggs of the Bobolink with a lantern.

Does the female Bobolink always alight on the ground or take wing at some distance from the nest? As has been shown, the female Bobolink is not more cautious in such actions than some other birds. The writer is not aware that the female ever alights directly at the nest, but he has frequently observed one alight very near the nest, and from such movements has been able to determine very closely the immediate neighborhood of the site. Once I saw a female Bobolink go to a certain spot in a meadow, though meanwhile I had watched her movements intermittently for several days and upon following her I flushed her from the grass within three feet of where I stood, exposing her cozy nest with five eggs. It is not uncommon to startle a sitting Bobolink within six feet of her nest, even in the early days of the period of incubation. When the bird is thus flushed, she flutters away over the grass with quivering wings and expanded tail, manifest-

ing the usual signs of bird distress at the sudden disturbance of the household.

If our field operations is a large unbroken meadow, lacking tree or shrub or bush or fence post, an area to which we have given no previous observation to the movements of the merry tenants, it would be a difficult matter to walk into it and find nests of the Bobolink off-hand. So would it be difficult to find nests of anything in it, off-hand, except as one chanced to flush a Meadow Lark or whatnot. It is such work that removes Oology from the pale of the sciences. Suppose it is a field, however, where Bobolink music flows in all its volubility, where we loaf frequently to watch the movements of the merry-hearted songsters as they pass the season of nuptial bliss, where an occasional tree or bush or salient weed-stem affords a favorite elevation for the jingling performances of the males. Under such circumstances we ought to find several nests hidden in the grassy coverts.

What signs shall guide us in our determination of nesting sites? First, I should say, the apparent favored elevation from which the male utters his merry jingles. Now, we understand that the male will sing all over the neighborhood, from all sites available, in the air as well as on the ground; but there will be one particular site from which he sings more frequently than elsewhere. The nest will be somewhere within a small radius of that favored station.

Whenever the female leaves the nest and appears a-wing, it is in order for the male to pursue her with his music, for his gallantry is proverbial; when she returns to the nest, he is likely to continue his amorous pursuit. On such occasions, as she drops into the grass to escape his fervent pleadings, he will more frequently than oth-

erwise alight on his favorite perch and give vent to his bubbling emotions.

The favorite site of the male's performances having been determined, the female then does her part in revealing the general location of the nest. She is notoriously capricious in her movements, and is likely to drop into the grass anywhere at any impulse when closely pursued. There is one restricted area, however, in which she is interested more than in all else besides. She will alight in that one locality more than in any other. The observer may be occasionally misled by annoying irregularities in the vagaries of the modest bird; there is, however, one particular part of the meadow toward which she will tend in the outcome of these capricious moments, and the observer's part is to determine the little area which she seems to visit most often within the larger area guarded by the watchful actions of the male. After several days of watching, the observer should be able to guess quite closely regarding the whereabouts of the nests of the pairs under observation.

Once I was spending an afternoon in a little meadow where Bobolink music was making the air vibrant with melody. I was standing near the edge of the meadow, and a male was singing frantically on a fence post, the nearest one, about twenty-one feet from me. Wishing to test the matter, I fired a little collecting gun I carried. Instantly from the grass tuft within three feet of me, directly in front, out fluttered a female that had been sitting on her nest, very near the place I had seen her drop as she was amorously pursued by the male a few minute before. Now it was evident to me that he was not singing to mislead me, but to charm the ear of his fair one in her nest; and I respectfully submit that the most of Bobo-

link singing is for that purpose. Furthermore, in my experience, he sings most energetically though more nervously around the site when the nest is in danger of molestation. He moves his station frequently, but is apt to make more frequent use of the favored platform for his nervous jingles.

On another occasion I decided definitely about the location of the nest of a pair of Bobolinks. The male was accustomed to prefer a small thorn-bush in the middle of a small meadow-marsh, and I had seen the female alight frequently in a little area about forty feet from the bush, in the level grass of the meadow. On one occasion, while the male was singing eloquently on the bush, I walked directly toward him and past the site I had determined; as I expected the female rose from the grass near the place. Search as closely as I might, however, no nest could be found. I went away from the place, and very soon the female stole through the grass again in the same locality. This time I ran as quickly as possible to the place, and flushed the female rather hastily, but again was unsuccessful in the search. Again I went to a safe distance, and again had the satisfaction of seeing the female wending her way quietly but surely to the place. To test my determination of the site, I flung a stout stick into the immediate area, and out came the female; once more I made a bootless quest for the nest.

For the last time I allowed the female ample time to recover herself and settle on the nest; then I cautiously approached the place. When I thought myself as near as I could get without starting from the nest, I pitched forward my collecting box, and out she came with a confusion of wings and tail. Then I understood the cause of my former sorties. It

was a peculiar site, in a tuft of grass over which a flat disc of dried cow manure had been blown or otherwise lodged, making a flat and complete covering for the nest and thus hiding it from view. In fact, only when the bird fluttered from the covering, as I saw her, did I think of such a place for the nest. In this instance, after all my disturbance of her, the female sat until I was within six feet of her nest.

The Bobolink in Montana seems to be more prolific than the bird in the east. Our rare mountain air may be more conducive to a larger average in the nest complement. Sets of seven are as common in my observation as sets of five. I should be ashamed of a Montana Bobolink that could produce only four eggs; I wouldn't take them. Sets of five, six, and seven are the regular thing, if the Cowbird doesn't impose any others. Five of the owner and two of the parasite are common.

P. M. SILLOWAY,  
Lewistown, Mont.

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#### Editorial Comments.

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Mr. Silloway's observations are very welcome at this juncture, but they are widely at variance with my observations during 23 years of more or less association with their haunts since I became Ornithologically interested in 1884.

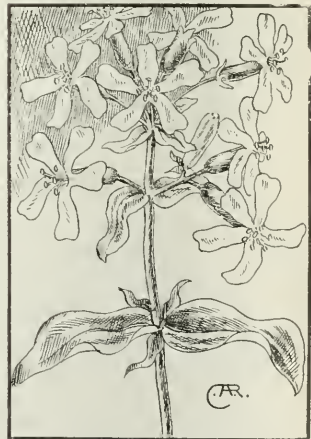
I have tried his plan of watching the female alight repeatedly, and have just one success to chronicle and in that case she had hatched two young which made her more solicitous and was conducive to close sitting. Have seen my friends fail time and time again. I heartily agree that the male sings for the one purpose of making known his presence to the sitting female, being in this respect no different from several other birds who

differ only in the effusiveness of their entertainment. Take the Baltimore Oriole and all the Vireos as familiar examples.

The Kildeer, Bartramian Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope and Ruffed Grouse are examples of birds who make a demonstration that is clearly an effort to draw the observer away from the sitting female. While the female American Woodcock will always try to decoy you from her eggs, I have never seen the male at all under such circumstances.

I still think, however, that by some variation in the quantity or quality of his melody the male Bobolink acquaints the female of the proximity of unusual trespassers on their domain, and that she leaves the nest more promptly and carefully under such circumstances.

Truly the bird lover has much to learn yet.—ED.



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VOL. XXIV. No. 3.

ALBION, N. Y., MAR., 1907.

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VOL. XXIV. No. 3.

ALBION, N. Y., MAR., 1907.

WHOLE No. 236

## THE OÖLOGIST,

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### Taxidermy for Bird Students.

By JAY G. SIGMUND.

To beginners in the study of natural history this question usually presents itself, "How am I going to make a close study of birds and animals without killing them?"

We are all familiar with the many different methods of studying nature without "bloodshed," viz: the camera, field glass, bird magazine, etc., but we cannot as active students be satisfied with a mere photograph or ten minute examination of a bird through a field glass, and it is here that the art of taxidermy comes, a friend in need.

James Russell Lowell says in speaking of birds, "I bring them near to me with a field glass, a much better weapon than a gun." With all due respect to James Russell's feelings, I want to say that he made a better poet than a naturalist.

Ernest Seton Thompson says, "In order to learn what I have learned about birds, I had to do killing and lots of it."

But Mr. Thompson did not kill birds, examine them and then throw them away. He preserved them so that he could always keep them and refer to them at any time.

Personally, I do not advocate wholesale slaughter of any birds or animals, or anything of the sort. But to the bird student, I would say, learn as much about taxidermy as you possibly can, never kill a bird if you can find out what you want to know about it without doing so, and never kill a bird or animal without preserving it to the best of your ability.

You will find no trouble in getting hold of plenty of literature on this subject and I would earnestly recommend that every bird-lover do so.

The more bird students we have, the better it will be for the preservation of our birds in the end. A man who understands and loves birds is always on the lookout to prevent their destruction. So that the few birds that are killed now for study will help to preserve many bird lives in the future.

So, as I said before, do as little killing as possible, but when you do kill, preserve your specimens.

### THE QUAIL TRAP.

**Bob White Wins in Struggle for Existence—But One Wanton Act.—Hardy Ruffed Grouse.—The Gunner's Survival of the Fittest.—Pinus Canadensis Enjoys Its Southern Trip.—Owl's Well at the Owlery.**

The Quail Trap, Norwich, Conn., Jan. 3, 1907.—We cannot go away from the bungalow without a last lingering look at the birds who are leaving to the tender mercies of Mother Nature for three months. First in importance and first in our hearts, Bob White still bobs up serenely. June 27 a cock quail called for half a day from the walls and big rocks on our farm. Not receiving any answering call, he took a position twelve feet from the ground in an apple tree and poured forth a quick succession of clear, ringing calls. Failing to get any reply to this supreme effort, he finally came down from his unusual perch, and flew over toward West Woodstock, where three late covies of chicks were afterward reported.

A young neighbor shot four quail on Bay Election day from a covey from the west which suddenly appeared on his grounds. This thoughtless act was condemned by all the old wing-shots of Woodstock, not one of them shooting at a quail during the open season. Eight of the depleted covey, frightened and separated, came over on our land and were protected till the close season. On the afternoon they were driven over here, it was pitiful to hear the plaintive recall of the alarmed young birds. It was probably the first time that this covey had been fired at, and as many as six at one time were repeating their soft assembling note from our safe covers. On the day the close law went into effect, a tremendous company of fifty quail appeared in the neighborhood. We concluded that they must

be the western and southern birds introduced by Southbridge sportsmen only five miles away. My latest 1896 data, collected from trappers in many towns in New London and Windham counties, indicated that with a continuance of the present favorable weather, there will be a general increase of quail in 1907 in both counties.

Ruffed grouse have been abundant this year, full bags being the rule. Six of the best gunners have each killed their legal thirty-five partridges, and they report wary birds left in nearly all the covers. There are three left in our own woods, besides old Red Ruff, who has again fooled the scatter-gun people from Southbridge and the village. The day before the law "went on" Mr. Irvin Paine cautioned two men not to shoot an old female grouse which he wished left over to breed. A moment later three females were flushed at one point and not a gun was raised. In early December Mr. Paine flushed twenty partridges in a long woodland stroll. In November, Mr. Foster Child started a goshawk from a brush pile where it had been lunching on a "chicken pat."

Pine grosbeaks have been abundant here during the month of December and are common now in the four parishes. They are in the orchards picking seeds from rotten apples, and they come into the dooryards and pick up food of various kinds. They are not at all shy and they appear in companies averaging about a dozen each. Though at present songless, both sexes are lively and seem greatly to enjoy life in their winter range. Females and young of the year predominate in every flock, and they are all dull colored—a few of the young birds showing grayish-white breasts. If they remain through February we are hoping the old males will assume the nuptial plumage.

An adult male pine grosbeak was caught by a cat December 14th, in the town clerk's yard in Village Corners. A female came into the ash tree at our window on the 15th and for two hours we watched her pranks. The limbs were ice-covered, and the bird would playfully slide down three or four feet, and then, with wings up-raised would flutter back, and coast down hill again. She would strip long wrappers of ice from the twigs, toy with them, and toss them into the air. Now and then she would eat an ash-bud and a bit of ice, and then go back to play. I don't think there was a limb or even a twig on our ash-tree that this jolly bird did not explore. A bunch of eight grosbeaks are in the ash-tree as I write these lines, one showing the light colored under parts and two nicely colored males in tint much like the average purple finch in spring dress.

When one of our bubos was at large, did I record the fact that we were first notified of the breakaway by all the crows in the English neighborhood, charging and harassing it with the well known hue and cry "Caw, caw! Another owl in town. Caw, caw! Lynch him. Lynch him!" There was more to this race war cry which I could not understand. If a farmer had not retaken the worried and tired out fugitive, I think it would have been driven back to the owlery for sanctuary.

The reason of the race war between the blacks and the larger owls I could never guess. We still feed our owls on raw meat once a day only, always after dark, and they thrive on this diet. They are adult birds now, assuming fine February feathers, and have feet, heavily winter furred. The nuptial hooting will begin early next month, and by the 20th we hope to see them mate and possible breed in their cage.

C. L. R.

### Large Robin Sets.

Before me is a letter from a Southern California correspondent asking for several species of eggs from Eastern Massachusetts, among them he asks for a "Robin's set containing five or more eggs." This is not the first request for large sets of this species that has come to me; in fact my brother and I average about six of these a year, coming from all over the country and especially from sections where the Robin does not breed or does not occur.

These large Robin sets seem to be a thing much sought for and also a freak that is comparatively common in collections that I have seen and heard of in parts of the country where the Robin was a non-breeder. These sets have been bought or exchanged from a correspondent, and in most cases they have not paid more than a fifth to one-half more for the set than they would for a set of four eggs. In most cases the owner of such sets seemed rather surprised when I became unusually interested and asked him a good deal about the set, as to who collected it, &c., and would then want to know all about the breeding habits as I found them in Eastern Massachusetts.

Now most of these sets were cases of orders being filled for exchange, and had been placed some time during the late summer or winter previous to the breeding season, from people who lived in a section where the Robin did not breed. It was not an exchange between parties who had a personal acquaintance with each other. They were like most exchanges, where both people are on their honor to be honest in all details of data, &c., &c. Now it is unusual to find people that are a little loose, but I am sorry to say that I have found that they exist.

Now as to my personal experience in sets of five or better, it is small to say the least, even though I live in a section where the robin is the commonest breeding bird, and have been collecting eggs and notes for a good many years. It consists of finding one nest with four young birds and a runt egg; my brother has never seen over four eggs. This may seem like a small showing, but such it is in spite of the fact that we have looked into hundreds of nests, in the hopes of finding a set of more than four eggs.

My Oologist friends about Massachusetts whom I know intimately show little better records. One gives me his records of one with five eggs and one of six; another friend one of five and speaks of a bird that he was told always nests on a certain house and invariably lays over four eggs. I don't doubt that these statements of mine may be an unusual case; it may be that it is a peculiarity of the robin of Eastern Massachusetts to be very uniform in their laying; or it may be merely my bad luck. Whichever it is, it will give me great pleasure to receive correspondence from other Oologists on this subject, either through the "Oologist" or to me at Milton, Mass.

L. BROOKS.

Probably 500 sets of Robin have passed through my hands since 1889. I have only one record of an authentic set of over 4 eggs. This set of 7 eggs was taken by A. E. Kibbe, at Mayville, N. Y., May 31, 1890.

Nest was in an apple tree and Mr. Kibbe did not note anything unusual.

Incubation nearly fresh; eggs uniform in type and size (slightly under normal), and much stained as though they had been deserted for some time.

—ED.

## Here and There.

The September Oologist reminds one of old times—of the '90s, the heyday of the egg crank. Times have changed somewhat. Interest in our beloved hobby has waned to a marked degree, and this very practical world shoots out the lip, so to speak, at the few who still find pleasure in the rather doubtful pursuit of bird's nesting. Some blame the Audubon laws, which in some states are practically prohibitive. There is no such trouble in North Carolina. The law here requires the payment of one dollar and a certificate of good character, signed by two witnesses, and there you go.

There are no restrictions or conditions other than conservative collecting, and that for scientific purposes; abuse of privilege may cause the permit to be annulled. No permits are issued to boys under sixteen. The permit does not include the colonies on the coast. Eggs or birds cannot be collected there under any circumstances. In consequence, the size of the colonies has more than doubled since the passage of the law.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you have not read the excellent monograph of the Long-billed Marsh-wren in August and September Oologists, look it up and read it. You will find it worth the while. It surpasses in exhaustiveness the Rev. Gilbert White's studies of the British hirundines in his "Natural History of Selbourne," which is saying a good deal. By the way, that is a little book one can read with much pleasure and some profit. It is full of quaint sayings and quainter notions, such as the hibernation of Swallows (Hirundinae) in the mud, or in the church steeples and towns.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Harrower, referring to Mr. Smithwick's article on the Ruby-

throat, speaks of finding nests in conifeous trees. I have never found any in other trees than Oaks, Dogwoods and Poplars, Dogwoods being preferred. It seems—with a great many birds, at least—a matter of locality. Take the Crow (*c. Americana*) for instance. Farther north Oakwoods are always sought as a breeding ground, but here in the south, pines are almost always preferred, no doubt because they afford better concealment than the naked deciduous woods do in March and April, the breeding time for the Crow.

\* \* \* \* \*

May 7, went down the creek. In a willow stub in the creek found a chickadee's nest containing young. Further down found another chickadee's nest in a stump near the bank. It contained six fresh eggs. Nothing unusual in that, but a blue-bird had its nest in the same stub, the entrance hole of which was not more than three inches from that of the chickadee. Such harmonious dwelling is not quite common.

\* \* \* \* \*

More than one bird-lover regretted the suspension of "American Ornithology." Even more would we regret the suspension of "Oologist," but we are not much afraid. The Oologist has been with us too long—so long that it has become indispensable, the "necessary magazine" for the bird-man.

JACOB BOSTIAN.

Statesville, N. C.

---

Allegheny, Pa.

In the January Oologist the editor requests that careful observers give a report of the conditions of bird life in their localities.

In my locality, Riverview Park, Allegheny, Pa., there was a marked increase in numbers of the Baltimore Orioles (*Icterus galbula*); the Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers (*Dryobates*

*pubescens medianus et villosus*); and a slight increase in most other species, notably the Sparrows, during the season of 1906. On the other hand there was a decrease in the numbers of the Wood Thrushes (*Hylocichla mustelina*); and the different members of the Flycatcher family; and there is a general absence of winter visitants.

The migration of last fall was particularly notable because of the great numbers of White-throated Sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*).

The one thing which tends to limit the number of birds hereabouts is the great number of nests that are wantonly destroyed by small boys, but, happily, this menace is being stamped out.

Let us hear what other observers have to say.

WM. G. PITCAIRN.

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#### Nesting of the Carolina Chickadee in Philadelphia County, Pa.

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By RICHARD F. MILLER.

The Carolina Chickadee (*Parus carolinensis*) is a very rare breeder in Philadelphia county, but one nest having come under my observation and this was found two years before I kept a note book. I cannot give the approximate date. As nearly as I can remember this nest was found in the second week of May, 1895. It was found at Holmesburg, along the Pennypacker Creek, and was an original cavity excavated in the decayed, barkless stub of a soft willow; it was about eight feet from the ground, and contained 7 eggs, laid in two layers. Not collecting eggs at that time, they were not taken, but somebody else got them, for I remember visiting the locality about a week later and finding the nest and eggs gone. The bird, presumably, the female, was flushed from the nest, when we first

found it, and perched close by, watching in alarm our inspection of her treasure.

During the past ten years I have hunted in vain for a nest of this rare breeder in this county, in fact, have never observed a bird in the breeding season and have seen very few even during the winter months.

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### Wild Pigeons.

---

Reports from various locations in the Lake Superior region indicate that, after an absence of thirty years, wild pigeons, also called passenger pigeons because of the conspicuous habit of passing from one part of the country to another in immense flocks, sometimes clouding the sky—are coming back to the forests of “the north country.” Just where these pretty birds of passage have kept themselves for a third of a century is not known, but the general superstition is that they have been breeding in the wooded unsettled lands of South America. “The Boston Advertiser” says woodsmen report hundreds of them along the Colquet River, in St. Louis county, and colonies have also arrived, it is said, in Wisconsin woods, north of Superior. Last spring a flock was seen in Presque Isle Park, at Marquette, Mich., by the caretaker, who when a young man had killed many of the birds, and he recognized the species at once.

Many middle aged and elderly men remember the old days on their farms in Minnesota and Michigan in the Great Lakes region, when these birds were so numerous that a boy could kill hundreds of them in a day with no better weapon than a club.

In those days trapping the birds for the market was a regular business with a large number of men. Nets were spread out in the stubble field after

the harvest. A few decoy pigeons were placed here and there, just as sportsmen now decoy wild ducks in their flight.

Then lured by their kind, and a lavish sprinkling of grain, the pigeons would descend in thousands on the net covered ground. A dexterous sweep of the net by experienced hands would entrap the quarry.

The birds were served at hotels and restaurants in the cities and were regarded a great delicacy. In fact, such great favor did this food win that squab raising has been a profitable business since the departure of the wild species years ago.

Stories about old settlers seeing millions of passenger pigeons instead of thousands might seem somewhat exaggerated, but early travelers in the region of the Great Lakes have remarked in their writings the enormous numbers of these birds, which required for their food great quantities of grain.

Their food consisted of the smallest acorn and thin shelled nuts, beech nuts, and a variety of berries and small fruits. Where such material was plentiful they gathered in vast congregations, which thronged upon the trees until the branches would break with their weight.

Pigeon shooting was a favorite amusement among sportsmen when the birds were plentiful. As many as twenty thousand birds were used at a single tournament before the public sentiment and law checked the slaughter. The incessant slaughter and persecution, together with the clearing away of large areas of forest, rapidly drove the pigeons out.

The disappearance of the birds from the lake region was hastened by the cold winters and late, stormy springs between 1860 and 1870. Since then the wild pigeons have been

known only in scattered numbers, here and there, but their natural enemies are now diminishing and for some reason they are coming back to their old haunts.—New York Tribune, Jan. 27, '07.

Editor Oologist:—

Will you allow an old collector to enter a mild protest against the sort of collecting indicated in the note of inquiry by Clarence Hoard, as cited in the Oologist for December?

Are we to infer that Mr. Hoard actually took an unknown set of eggs without securing the nest, also? To take eggs whose identity is unknown and virtually un-knowable is bad enough; to fail of taking the only positive clue to identity, after taking the nest, is little short of a blunder.

There is still a deal of worthless material offered for exchange by our present generation of collectors. Worse yet, there are sets offered with the most reckless disregard not only of identities but of exactness as to the make-up of sets. A Philadelphia subscriber sent the undersigned about a year ago, a job-lot assortment of cormorant eggs from the coast region of California. When confronted with the combination of ignorance and fraud he pleaded innocence (as they all do), but has not yet shown himself man enough to "make good."

But where the question of unidentified sets is one of ignorance, and not of positive dishonor the remedy lies in greater exactness; and in the taking of pains. We all erred, in these directions, when we were younger; but we try to do better now.

Ordinarily, it is far better to leave a doubtful set to hatch than to take it without any clue as to its real identity. There is ordinarily no sort of excuse for failure to take the parent bird with a doubtful set; (and there are, let it be observed, more doubtful

sets taken than most of us might be ready to believe).

It can be readily proven whether the eggs taken by Mr. Hoard are vireo eggs; or something else placed in an abnormal nest. But the identity must, in any case, be equivocal; and the color suggestions given by Mr. Hoard, in the Oologist, are utterly worthless. (The writer would not trust his own identifications, "in the bush," with birds of the class in question. One's sense of color is modified by too many considerations of shadow and light direction to make snap-shot suggestions concerning the color impressions upon the human eye of more than probable value in making determinations.)

The writer would like to venture the strong urging, upon all younger students of bird-life, of the positive duty of learning at least the chief elements involved in the making of bird-skins. There are times when the knowledge thus involved may prove of very great value; and other times when it is absolutely essential. For example, in the Wyoming field, where the writer has labored during the past three years, adding, incidentally, three birds to the state list, fully one-half of the very valuable and interesting material obtained would have been absolutely worthless without the taking of the parent birds.

Questions of sentiment should have little relative weight, here. Granted that the taking of eggs is a legitimate branch of scientific pursuit, and then it follows, that when absolutely necessary, for purposes of specific or of sub-specific identification, the taking of a parent bird is quite as justifiable as the taking of eggs; however much of pain the taking of life may cause us.

If, then, we are either too tender-hearted or too indolent to verify our egg-findings, let us, by all means, join

the opera-glass brigade. Thus, we may be well assured that the great mass of earnest investigators of bird life will have no cause to take us seriously, in any sense. There is more than one sense in which "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

P. B. PEABODY,  
Blue Rapids, Kas.

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Stamford, Conn.

Ernest H. Short.

Dear Sir:—Answering your question in the January Oologist, "Are our birds growing fewer?" I have observed that the English Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) which was introduced into this country in 1890, have become very abundant in this locality.

On January 14 last, I noticed a flock of 100 of these birds in an elm tree. They were very tame, as I was able to get right under the tree they were in. On January 15 last I counted a flock of 50, which were also very tame. Two years ago I put up some bird houses in a tree not more than two yards away from the house. They have bred in these every year and I expect them again this coming spring.

Very truly,

P. G. HOWES.

---

#### Does It Exist?

What is the best kind of blower for eggs? I use a common glass pipe and blow with my mouth for small eggs.

For larger eggs, such as Gt. Blue Heron and Osprey, I have an atomizer bulb which I use with my hand. This forces the contents out all right, but I find it moves about too much when the pressure is made and therefore is liable to chip the hole when the pipe is inserted.

Is there any thing made that you consider just the thing?

I have looked through the Oologist several times for an article about blowing eggs and the best egg-blower, but do not see anything.

Tell us how an egg-blower should be made, so as to give the best results.

Yours truly,  
E. J. DARLINGTON.

Answer—Probably the BEST egg blower is yet to be heard from.

For small eggs we have never seen anything that would successfully replace the mouth and blowpipe. Nothing else seems to allow of an adjustment of pressure nice enough to avoid bursting thin shelled eggs.

To avoid the wobbling of the tip of the pipe, any style of portable automatic hand blower, take a small block of any tough wood that does not split too easy. Bore a hole through it that will just fit your pipe, a short distance back from tip. Cut this block vertically through the center of the hole. Take ordinary hand vise and insert the handle upright in a hole wherever you may be, at home, in the woods, anywhere; you can generally find something you can punch or bore a hole in that will firmly hold the little vise upright. Insert your pipe with wood blocks between the jaws of the vise and screw up until firmly held, not tight enough to smash the pipe, of course. A wad of paper will answer the purpose of the split block at a pinch.

The hand vises can be furnished by almost all hardware dealers.

I handle one style costing only 75 cents, that has place made purposely to hold in this manner, having a rounded space that takes any pipe; you simply wind a strip of cloth or paper around pipe until it fits snugly.—ED.

### Value of Our Warblers.

---

It being a well-known fact, that birds have an important bearing upon agriculture, the family, Warblers, comprising as it does of so many species, must play an important part in the beneficial or harmful work done by birds. The number of representatives of this family in Connecticut is about twenty-two, (excepting a few rare or occasional visitors). Of the principal foods of a few of the more common species, I shall presently speak. Let us, however, consider first, the food of the family as a whole.

From the fact that they are almost exclusively insectivorous, and that they are soft-billed, two deductions, (which show in what field they exert the greatest influence), may be drawn.

Being insectivorous, little if any influence is exerted by them in the destruction of vegetable forms wild or cultivated, and being soft-billed, all the insects taken must be the soft bodied species, for the capture of which their bills are admirably suited, while the hard-shelled beetles or those insects on the wing, are taken by a few species only.

The insects eaten by these birds must then comprise the soft-bodied kinds and inasmuch as the birds are arboreal, the plant-inhabiting species, their foods may therefore be divided into three classes: (1) Leaf-inhabiting insects and those which hover around leaves and blossoms; (2) Bark-inhabiting insects; and, (3) the eggs of both.

Ground beetles are eaten by the Ovenbird; snails and other ground-slugs are also eaten.

Certain hibernating insects are taken by the migrants, but of these we shall speak later.

From these statements, it may seem that the Warblers are a benefit to the

orchard grower, and to all the trees in general, since their foods is made up of insects which infest trees mostly.

Part of these are eaten by the adult birds, but a greater portion of the insects destroyed by Warblers are eaten by the nestlings. The quantity of food consumed by them is enormous. From the moment of hatching to the age of from four to six weeks, they seem to be made up of little else but mouth and stomach. Their constant demands for food keep both parent birds busy in supplying it, chiefly small, very soft insects, caterpillars, plant lice and eggs.

From this we see how great an influence the nestling birds exert indirectly to lower the number of noxious insects.

The statements, however, are only in regard to summer residents. We still have the migrant warblers to deal with.

These summer north of us and winter south of us and, in migrating, pass to and fro through our region, and, while it is true their stay is brief yet the chill of approaching cold weather makes them all the more active in search of food. As I said before, hibernating insects during their migration, form a large per cent. of their food. These are taken from dried leaves, the under side of twigs and from crevices in the bark.

Taking a few species representative of the different groups of warblers which will show us how this insect destruction is carried on, we shall consider: (1) Those that take their food from leaves and blossoms; (2) Those that take their food from crevices in the bark; (3) Those that take a great part of their food on the wing, after the manner of flycatchers, and (4) Those that take their food from the ground. Only one or two representatives from each group will be dealt with.

As an example of the first class, the Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*), and the Northern Yellow-throat, (*Geothlypis trichas brachydactyla*), may be taken. The food of both these birds is somewhat similar consisting mainly of caterpillars, larvae, spiders and plant lice, the last named, most destructive pests are taken in great quantities.

These birds are both examples of that class which inhabit trees and bushes the Yellow-throat keeping to damp, swampy growths, while the Yellow Warbler prefers drier land.

Although they may not be classed as highly beneficial, yet the good done by them far outweighs any harm.

The Black and White Creeper, (*Mniotilta varia*), is a common example of a warbler which takes its food from the bark of trees. It is often confused with the woodpeckers from its black and white markings and from its habit of scrambling over the bark in woodpecker fashion. Spiders, ants, caterpillars and larva constitute the chief articles of diet. All of these, with perhaps, a few of the spiders which are predaceous, excepted, may be counted to its credit.

A careful study of the feeding habits of this bird show how thoroughly the destruction of bark-inhabiting insects is pursued and of what great value this bird, in conjunction with the woodpeckers, is in preserving our forest trees.

Caterpillars form a large per cent. of the food of the young birds.

A large number of warblers, a few among our migrants, catch a large part of their food on the wing, moths, butterflies, flies and millers. The Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), is a very familiar example of this class.

The above named insects form a large part of its diet.

Mrs. Irving Bruce writes that she found a nestful of Redstarts and ascertained that they were fed on insects from five to thirty times per hour. The insects were caught by the mother-bird on the wing and often included millers.

The Ovenbird (*Leiurus arocapillus*), is often mistaken for a thrush and, indeed, its habit of running rapidly along and then suddenly stopping and straightening up in a listening attitude, is decidedly thrush-like. Its color, too, with the heavily spotted breast, is often misleading.

It is a representative of the ground-feeders and among its numerous articles of diet are snails and click beetles, which it obtains from the forest floor, for this bird inhabits the deep still woods and forests. Even its nest is placed on the ground, arched over like a dome, plastered with leaves and mud, a sort of oven, from which the bird gets its name.

"The stomach of these half-grown nestlings of the Ovenbird examined in the laboratory contained beetles of the family Lampyridae, click beetles, caterpillars, moths, millers, and snails. Spau worms are also eaten. Span worms are also eaten.

Thus we see what, mainly, constitute the food of these birds, for owing to the great number of species and their wide distribution, enormous numbers of insects, in the main harmful species, are destroyed by them yearly.

LEON A. HANSMAN.

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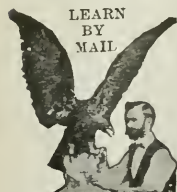
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VOL. XXIV. No. 4.

ALBION, N. Y., APRIL, 1907.

WHOLE No. 237

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VOL. XXIV. No. 4.

ALBION, N. Y. APRIL, 1907.

WHOLE No. 237

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,  
Chili, Monroe Co., N. Y.

### The Brown Creeper.

This active little bird can be seen in our locality almost throughout the whole year, always busily engaged in looking for small insects, eggs and larvae in the crevices of bark of

pretty near all of our forest trees. Their long, slender, partly curved bill is a great aid to them, which partly supplants the strong muscular neck, bill and barbed tongue of the Sapsuckers and Woodpeckers. It cannot cut out the insects or larvae from the bark of the oak, elm, maple and pine trees, but has to depend mainly on its sharp eyes in detecting in the crevices the minute eggs of insects.

Starting at the bottom of the trees they ascend them by dainty and little jerks in a spiral manner, stopping frequently for its prey, uttering a few soft notes like "Lri, zri, zri," or "Sit, sit, sit," and fly to the foot of a nearby tree to go over the same performance. How well the color of this little bird, a variety of rich browns, curiously marked, the white underneath being out of sight, corresponds with the colors of this open winter.

The Brown Creeper invariably runs up a tree on the off-side if he sees that you are watching him. It's flight is very nervous and quick. In spring it is much more numerous, as the largest number of this climber passes south in the fall and north in the spring.

It can be readily seen that the Brown Creeper is of great benefit to our forest trees, not being inclined to change his food for a strawberry or cherry, like the Red-headed Woodpecker, and not inviting the wrath of the farmer going after him with a shot gun.

In the first week in April the mating season commences in our locality

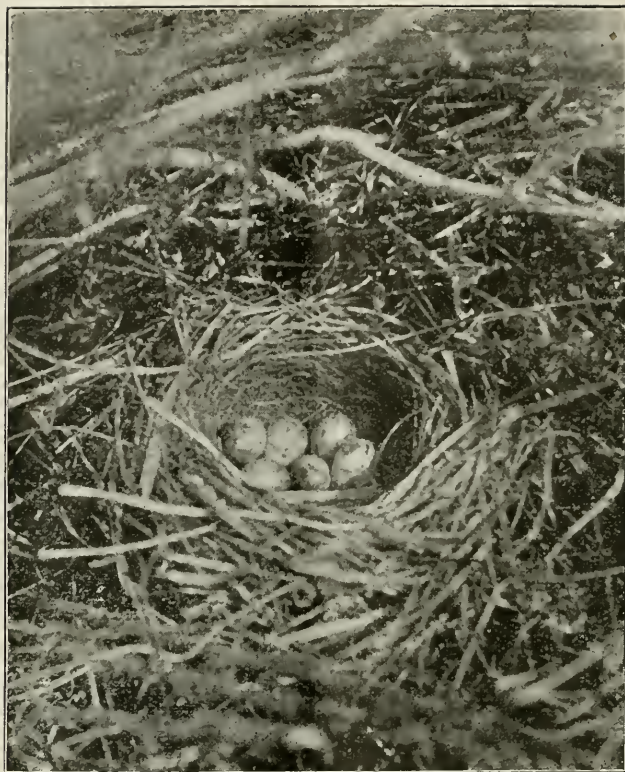


Photo by Rockwell.

**Nest and Eggs of Brewer's Blackbird. In Situ.**

and the loving couple looks for a nesting site, which is finally found behind loose bark connected above and below on elms and maples, generally within easy reach.

They construct the nest by placing small twigs, bark, moss, etc., in the lower part of the loose bark, completing and lining it with fine, soft material. We have taken sets of 6 and only one set of 7 eggs from May 6 to 16th—all the eggs were fresh, of a white or creamy ground color, hand-

somely speckled with reddish brown, some times a regular circle of spots around the larger end.

About the first week in June the young emerge from the eggs, keeping their parents extremely busy to supply them with sufficient nourishment.

Further particulars will be gladly given by

ED. REINECKE,

400 Elm St.

Buffalo, N. Y.

### Brewer's Blackbird.

Wherever in the countryside of Southern California there are tilled fields; wherever in the cities there are wide lawns, there will Brewer's Blackbird be found. This is the only grackle common to the Pacific slope of Los Angeles county, and is a right welcome visitor wherever found, hailed alike by orchardist and gardener as the slayer of unnumbered worms and bugs. I doubt if in the whole United States there is a bird more widely noted for its good work or more genuinely welcomed by all than is this species in the center of its abundance—Southern California.

I have met with Brewer's Blackbird in the pine-covered mountains back of San Fernando, at an elevation of not less than 3,500 feet, nest in trees about a mountain ranch house and apparently a permanent resident. But, for the most part, this grackle is a dweller in the low lands from the orange orchards of the foothills to the dairy ranches which dot the lowlands down almost to the seacoast. In all these varied sections, the nesting time is practically uniform, extending from the last week of February to June.

Even now, February 21, though a brisk shower is falling, a band, which must number a hundred, is making a row of cypress trees not far from the house vocal with their music.

Robins have been unusually plentiful here all winter, but the Blackbirds have practically driven them off the five acres of which this place is compassed. California Shrikes and Western Mockingbirds (only one pair of each), nest undisturbed in the cypress trees where the Brewer's have bred for years.

At my home in the city a few pairs of the blackbirds are already building nests in trees near the house and

not more than 150 feet from a car line with a three minute service. It might be added the Mockingbirds, House Finches, Black Phœbes, and a pair of Anthony's Towhees also nest near this house.

Eggs are rarely laid by Brewer's Blackbird before the middle of March. Then the nests are complete—for this is a leisurely nest-builder—and, despite their large size, are marvels of compact weaving and warm lining.

First, a platform, or rude cradle of twigs half the size of a lead pencil is laid in a horizontal fork of a cypress, orange, pepper or other heavily foliaged tree. This platform has a small hollow in the center and the twigs of which it is made are well interwoven with the small leaf branches of the tree. In this framework, usually about seven or eight inches across, is built up a cup of rootlets, fine twigs, grass blades, bits of string, occasionally a piece of "balancing wire," if the bird can find one short enough. Usually, however, especially if the nesting site be in the country, this first cup is made almost entirely of rootlets and fine, pliable twigs, culled from piles of brush left by tree trimmers.

The female Blackbird shapes the inside of this cup with her body, using as much care as do most birds in making the soft interior nest. Lying along the roof of my father's barn I have many a time watched a pair of these somber-coated birds, both working "like beavers" to complete their home. On the outside of the nest the male bird worked, on the inside the female, and the latter gathered most of the material for the nest.

Oftentimes this rootlet-cup is cemented together with mud, but in most cases a mud lining is made fastened to the outer cup and to the lining of hair which comes next. Nine

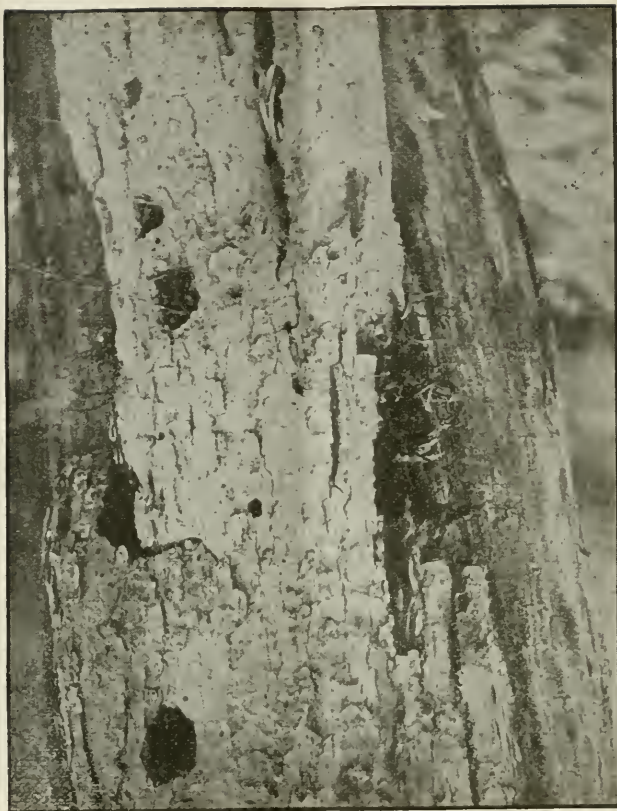


Photo by Reinecke.

**Nest of Brown Creeper In Situ.**

times out of ten this inner nest is of horse or cow hair, very rarely of feathers, now and then of fine, dry grass blades. Therefore I have called it the "hair lining" of the nest, though it is not always of hair.

In this respect of mud and hair lining, though the mud layer seldom covers more than the bottom of the nest, I judge that these birds build somewhat as do the Eastern Robins. The hair lining is one-eighth of an inch thick and so closely woven as to retain its shape long after removal from the outer nest.

From three to eight eggs are laid, ordinarily six. It is absolutely impossible to describe these eggs; the ground color ranges all the way from pallid grey to light green. Markings are from practically none to heavy blotches and are gray or light sepia. Occasional lines and scrawls of black or dark brown are noticeable on some of the eggs. Some resemble the eggs of the Western Mockingbird, still others are scarcely distinguishable from heavily marked shrike's eggs.

Among the numerous misstatements in Mrs. Wheeler's "Birds of

California," at at least three concerning this species: The breeding season is there set down at "April 15 to July 1;" the eggs are give as 4 to 6, and the obviously erroneous statement made that the nests are "not over eight feet from the ground." The average of more than one hundred sets of Brewer's Blackbird collected by me during the past twelve years were in nests more than fifteen feet from the ground. Many of them were more than twenty feet up; several above thirty feet and four or five from nests in Eucalyptus trees forty feet from the ground.

HARRY H. DUNN.

Los Angeles, Cal.

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### City Birds.

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A list of birds that I have found breeding within the city limits of Hartford, Conn., since April 1, 1893:

Barred Owl, 2 young, Apr. 10, 1893.

Red-shouldered Hawk, 3 eggs, Apr. 23, 1893.

Red-shouldered Hawk, 2 eggs, Apr. 20, 1894.

Bluebird, 4 eggs, May 1, 1894.

Brown Thrasher, 5 eggs, May 10, 1894.

Robin, 4 eggs, May 10, 1894.

Swamp Sparrow, 3 eggs, May 11, 1894.

Flicker, 6 eggs, May 11, 1894.

Purple Grackle, 4, 5 and 6 eggs, May 16, 1894.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 4 eggs, May 20, 1894.

Phoebe, 5 eggs, 1 Cowbird egg, May 20, 1894.

Wilson's Thrush, 4 eggs, May 20, 22 and 25, 1894.

Yellow Warbler, 4 eggs, 1 to 3 Cowbird's, May 16 to June 10, 1894.

Black-billed Cuckoo, 4 eggs, May 22, 1894.

Least Flycatcher, 4 eggs, May 22, 1894.

Meadow Lark, 4 and 5 eggs, May 22, to July 31, 1894.

Orchard Oriole, 4 and 5 eggs, May 23, 1894.

Red-winged Blackbird, 4 and 5 eggs, May 25 to June 10, 1894.

Baltimore Oriole, 4 to 6 eggs, May 25 to June 15, 1894.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 3 eggs, June 13, 1894.

Wood Duck, 6 young, June 10, 1894.

Field Sparrow, 4 eggs, June 13, 1894.

Chipping Sparrow, 4 eggs, June 17, 1894.

Kingbird, 3 and 4 eggs, June 25, 1894.

Am. Crow, 6 eggs, April 13 to 28, 1895.

Cowbird, 3 eggs in Least Flycatcher's nest, May 19, 1895.

Maryland Yellow-throat, 4 eggs, May 19, 1895.

Song Sparrow, 4 eggs, May 19, 1895.

Catbird, 5 eggs, May 25, 1895.

Savannah Sparrow, 5 eggs, May 31, 1895.

Spotted Sandpiper, 3 and 4 eggs, June 9, 1895.

Bank Swallows, 4 and 5 eggs, June 9, 1895.

Vesper Sparrow, 4 eggs, May 4, 1896.

Yellow-breasted Chat, 4 eggs, May 30, 1896.

Indigo Bunting, 4 eggs, June 13, 1897.

Sparrow Hawk, 5 eggs, May 14, 1898.

Bobolink, 5 eggs, June 5, 1898.

Screech Owl, 4 eggs, April 20, 1899.

Chestnut-sided Warbler, 4 eggs, June 10, 1899.

Yellow-throated Vireo, 3 eggs, June 13, 1900.

Wood Pewee, 3 young, June 20, 1900.

White-eyed Vireo, 4 eggs, 1 Cowbird, May 25, 1901.

Warbling Vireo, 4 eggs, June 10, 1902.

Am. Redstart, 4 eggs, May 24, 1903.

Blue Jay, 5 eggs, May 25, 1903.

House Wren, 6 eggs, May 30, 1904.

Ame. Goldfinch, 5 eggs, July 27, 1904.

White-breasted Nuthatch, 6 eggs, May 2, 1905.

Purple Finch, 4 eggs, May 30, 1905.

Cedar Waxwing, 4 eggs, June 19, 1905.

Downy Woodpecker, 5 young, June 20, 1905.

Rough-winged Swallow, 5 young, June 28, 1905.

Purple Martins, 5 or 6 small colonies.

Chimney Swifts, 4 and 5 eggs, June 29, 1905.

#### CLIFFORD M. CASE.

Mr. Case's list is remarkably complete to be found within the limits of one of our eastern cities breeding.

There must be some almost deserted, overgrown waste ground within Hartford's limits or he would hardly have found Chestnut-sided Warbler.—ED.

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#### "A Day's Collecting."

The day was the 27th of April, 1902. It was a model day of spring, everything was awake and doing something. The bees were buzzing about, the butterflies flying from flower to flower, and the birds all singing. It all combined together to make one's heart leap with ecstasy.

We finally started, about 9 a. m. The first part of our trip took us up a steep grade, and then through a small grove, then it drops into a valley (site of the Escondido Irrigation District's Reservoir), which is quite a lake, being over a mile long when filled with water. In the upper part of this reservoir, where it is shallow, willows and weeds grow up, and af-

ford fine nesting places for Black-birds and San Diego Song Sparrows.

Here, we made our first stop, and collected a few sets of Bi-colored Black-bird; the nests were usually in willows or weeds, and composed of weeds and sedges woven together and lined with fine weed stems. The sets as a rule consisted of three eggs, though sets of four were not uncommon and one set of five was secured.

After leaving this place behind about a mile, we arrived in sight of our first Hawk nest. This was a nest of the Western Red-tail Hawk (*Buteo borealis calurus*) and was situated in the top of a Red Oak, nearly 50 feet from the ground. It contained two eggs, laying on a soft lining of dead oak bark and feathers. They were slightly marked with gold and tinged toward lavender. Incubation, I should judge was about one-half advanced. The nest was an old one built some years before.

When returning to our rig, I saw a nest of the California Bushtit (*psaltriparus minimus californicus*) swing from the end of an oak limb and looked like a great swarm of bees, (we having been surprised once previous in the day, mistaking a swarm of bees for a nest), but this was the real article and contained six fresh, white eggs, in proof thereof. The nest was ten feet up and made of oak blossoms and inner fibre of weeds, and lined abundantly with feathers.

Driving on a mile and a half, we came to a canyon that contained the next pair of Red-Tails. We hitched our horse to a fence post, and proceeded on down the canyon afoot. A little distance we observed a Desert Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius deserti colos*) flying around in the air, screaming as if he might have a nest nearby, but we were unable to locate it.

Not far from this we discovered a Bushtit's nest in a Red Oak sapling, 15 feet up. This was a queer appearing nest, being made of oak blossoms nearly entirely, thus giving it a rusty hue. The nest contained seven badly incubated eggs, laid on a soft lining of feathers.

Farther on we found a Hawk's nest, which had the appearance of having been repaired this season, and upon throwing a stick up at the nest, the female Hawk left the nest, which was 45 feet up in a dead Red Oak. I was agreeably surprised to find it contained three heavily marked eggs. The set was about one-half incubated.

Leaving this place we soon arrived in Guyito. This place is a long valley surrounded by rolling hills, covered with white oaks and brush. These foothills are cut through in places where a small stream finds its way down into the valley. In these small streams, you will find the largest trees, mostly oak and sycamore and here is the place you want to look for birds of most any species.

In a grove of White Oak trees we found a colony of Brewer's Black-birds nesting. Their nests were situated in the oaks from 10 to 40 feet up and made of sticks and twigs and dried mud, lined with horse hair. We did not take any as we expected to get some further on that were easier to secure.

Not far from here we again tied our horse and started up a promising looking canyon. We had not gone far before we passed a Hawk's nest in a large Red Oak tree, but it contained nothing. Further on we came to an old deserted house and on the side of it we found a nest of the Black Phoebe.

This nest contained five fresh eggs, two of the eggs being marked with a few red spots on the larger ends. The

nest was made of mud and lined with horse hair. In sight of this house and not 50 yards away, we noticed a large nest in the top of a red oak, and upon approaching, the female left the nest screaming and was soon joined by her mate, and they kept up a continued screaming while I climbed to the nest, which was 50 feet up in a triple crotch. This was a new nest built this season, and lined with fine oak bark thrashed out and feathers. The eggs were three in number, slightly marked with golden, and quite heavily with lavender. Incubation fresh.

In an oak sapling not far off, we found a crow's nest made entirely of sage brush, which contained five young. Five more ugly creatures would have been hard to find. They being black entirely, head and all. Going back down the canyon we found an old crow nest that looked as though it was inhabited, for it had downy feathers hanging from the edge of the nest. Climbing to it I had gotten right under it and was just peeping over the edge when an old Am. Long-eared Owl flopped off, disclosing four fresh eggs laid on a bed of oak leaves. The old Owl made quite a fuss about my taking her eggs, but it did no good.

Riding on from this place for quite a distance we came to a small tree, with a dead stub in the top of it, and upon arriving near we were surprised to see a Desert Sparrow Hawk come fluttering out of it, and on climbing to the stub, found it was hollow and at the bottom were five fresh eggs. Only a small distance from here we came upon another nest of the Red-Tail Hawk, but this only contained broken shells, but this did not stop the Hawks from making a most vicious fight, diving down at me at a great height, but always swerving before

they struck. This nest was 35 feet up, and lined with stubble and oak leaves.

Riding on some distance we came to a large barn and outbuildings. Here a large colony of Cliff Swallows were forming their domiciles of mud, under the eaves of the barn. None of the nests were as yet finished. But a large colony of Brewer's Black-birds had nests containing sets of eggs. The nests were built in willows and were made of roots and sticks stuck together with mud and lined with horse hair. We also collected a set of Black Phoebe, here, under a bridge. The nest was made of mud, and lined with horse hair and fastened to a girder. On the way home we collected a set of five fresh eggs of the Red Shafted Flicker (*Colapates cafer*) from a dead stub near the road.

From the foregoing notes it will be seen that this was rather late for the Red-tail to be nesting here, but all these were second sets, and most of them, as you will see, being badly incubated.

JAMES B. DIXON,  
Escondido, Calif.

#### Late Swallows at Philadelphia.

The observance of Swallows in October in the vicinity of Philadelphia is such a rare occurrence as to be worthy of more than passing notice, inasmuch as nowhere in my search for late records regarding migrating Swallows have I been able to discover any October records, excepting of the White-bellied Swallow, which usually departs during this month, being the latest Hirundinidae to leave as well as the earliest to appear in the spring.

The Barn Swallow, prior to this year, departed from this vicinity (Frankford) between September 15-20, as indicated by my migration records covering ten consecutive years of observation. This year, however, proved to be a notable exception, as this species lingered here unusually late, the last birds being seen October 10 by my brother, George.

This record is ten days later than my latest record of previous years—September 20, 1905. The two birds that my brother observed on October 20, were previously seen at the same locality on October 2, 3, and 4; and at the same place on the first, I saw

one bird. The locality is the meadows lying along the Delaware River at Bridesburg, Philadelphia. My brother saw four Barn Swallows on the 2d, one of which he shot, but mutilated it too badly for a skin. It was a young bird in moult, with tail slightly forked. The cat got it before I could ascertain its sex and examine the contents of its stomach. These records are undoubtedly of the same birds, the odd thing of the Hirundinidae, which was seen on the 2d day by my brother, not being afterwards seen, was presumably shot by some gunner, who avail themselves of every opportunity of practicing their marksmanship on these harmless birds.

The presence of these birds here so late in the fall, I attribute to the excessive warm weather of September. Consulting my note book under the weather entries, I find that the weather of this month was comparatively clear, with few cloudy and rainy days; the minimum and maximum temperature was 65 degrees and 77 degrees. The lowest temperature was registered on the 4th, 54 degrees; and the highest, 92 degrees, on the 10th. But, during these birds' stay here, in the early part of October, they encountered some cold and stormy weather, which failed, however, to drive them south for several days.

Many gunners also observed these birds, and those intelligent enough to discern and know the difference between them and the White-bellied Swallows, commented upon their unusual late presence, and attributed it to the warm September weather as I had done. Some predicted a mild winter on account of their presence, but weather predictions from such causes, as well as many others, are never infallible.

On September 29th, 1906, four Bank Swallows were seen by the writer at this locality, also a late date, for this species usually departs between September 10-20. On September 30, 1905, I saw a lone Bank Swallow flying high up, down the Delaware River, behind Petty's Island, N. J.

These records substitute the latest dates for these two species of Hirundinidae occurrence in the vicinity of Philadelphia which I have been able to find.

RICHARD F. MILLER,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION DEVOTED TO  
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXIDERMY.

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VOL. XXIV. No. 5.

ALBION, N. Y., MAY, 1907.

WHOLE No. 238

## Take Notice.

Examine the number following your name on the wrapper of this month's Oölogist. It denotes when your subscription expired or will expire.

Remember we must be notified if you wish paper discontinued and all arrearages must be paid.

209 your subscription expired Dec., 1904  
245 your subscription expires with this issue  
245 " " " " Dec., 1907  
257 " " " " Dec., 1908

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 5.

ALBION, N. Y. MAY, 1907.

WHOLE No. 238

## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXIDERMISTRY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

Correspondence and items of interest to the student of Birds, their Nests and Eggs, solicited from all.

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Chili, Monroe Co., N. Y.

### FIND MASTODON ON ICE.

Huge Monster, Preserved Intact, Will  
Be Exhibited at the Great Yukon  
Exposition—A Perfect Specimen.

Seattle, Wash., April 6.—When  
warm weather comes again a party

of men with well-developed domes of thought is going to take out of cold storage the largest and the oldest piece of meat ever preserved in this manner. They will be strengthened for their work by roasts from this wonderful bit of cold storage preservation and will bring back to civilization enough to prove the almost unbelievable stories they will tell.

The particular piece of meat, which is to be taken out of cold storage shortly, after the robins nest again, is a mastodon, which was discovered incased in ice in the Cleary Creek region of Alaska late last summer. The proposition is to induce this monster to yield up its hide, hair and bones for exhibition at the Alaskan-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, to be held at Seattle, Wash., year after next.

The flesh will be eaten, as it is not considered practical to preserve it with embalming fluid by the process practiced during the late unpleasantness with Spain in the case of roast beef prepared for the fighting men.

### Will Look as Alive.

Skeletons of the mastodon have been reconstructed from scattered bones and exhibited at former fairs, but no exposition has had the big beast just as he looked when alive.

The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition will be held primarily for the exploitation of Alaska.

Late last summer, while President J. E. Chilberg of the exposition was at Nome word was brought in that a complete specimen of a mammoth incased in ice had been discovered by W. E. Thomas on Cleary Creek.

Mr. Chilberg investigated and learned that the specimen was practically perfect, the flesh and hide being intact except in one small place, where some animal had eaten away a portion of the flesh.

Aside from the small hole in its back the animal was in excellent shape. It is probably the finest example of the preservative powers of cold storage extant, for the animal got caught long before people knew even how to keep ice during the summer months.

#### **Mastodon Can Be Removed.**

President Chilberg learned also that the mastodon could be removed from the ice, preserved and shipped to Seattle at comparatively small cost.

It was too late then to send a crew of men to preserve the specimen, but there was present the consolation that the approaching cold weather would freeze it solidly and no harm could come to it until next summer.

Early next summer Prof. Trevor Kincaid, the zoologist of the University of Washington, will be sent into the interior of the northland to save every particle of the creature possible. The job of preserving the monster will be a big one for some taxidermist. —Ex.

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### **ECONOMIC VALUE OF BIRDS.**

---

#### **Hawks, (Falconidae).**

All of the members of this family are generally looked upon as birds, whose ravages are responsible for the loss of poultry and game birds, yet this idea is held by many merely because some better authority has not stepped in to dispel this cloud of imagination and to shed light upon the real relation of these birds to their surroundings. Thus it is that they have acquired their bad reputa-

tion, all this, simply because some people shut their eyes to facts and dub them all as "chicken hawks," irrespective of species. It is while under this impression that the greatest slaughter is committed. Many instances have come under my notice both in Connecticut and other New England states, which shows that killing of hawks without regard to species is a reality and not a fanciful deduction from other facts, and not until it has been demonstrated that not all hawks are so black as they are painted will this condition of affairs cease.

It is, indeed, true that some species are harmful to the poultry raiser and subsist largely on game, and domestic fowls, and it is here that we should make the distinction and give them their due without burdening the innocent with their crimes.

The ill-repute of the whole hawk tribe is due to the depredations committed by the Accipiters, which, in Connecticut, are two in number, the Sharp Shinned Hawk, (*accipiter velox*), and the rarer species Cooper's Hawk, (*Accipiter cooperi*) to the first, which is the more common, let us turn our attention. This bird may often be seen in the spring and fall flapping over the trees and bushes, (the haunts of smaller birds,) with rapid wing-strokes, or gliding along in a low slant over a meadow frequently dodging to the right or left by a few vigorous flaps of its short, rounded wings, which motion shows off its long square tail by which it is distinguished from the Cooper's Hawk.

It feeds upon small birds, mice and poultry and in the capture of the last named, is exceedingly bold. Many times have I seen it plunge into the depths of some tree in pursuit of some smaller bird, which thought to take refuge within its branches, or

flap away from some isolated hen-yard or door-yard with a half-grown fowl in its talons.

Like all criminals, after committing a bloody deed, it seems to strive to evade the gaze of man and cringing from sight, rounds the trees with a zigzag flight for the nearest wood.

Of the Cooper's Hawk I have less complete data; this quotation from the U. S. year book will tell its own story: "In nine stomachs of young Cooper's Hawks were found a slender-billed nuthatch, flicker, remains of a brown thrasher, remains of a ruffed grouse, and a whole young chicken." Five of these hawks were from one nest.

Having dealt with the Accipiters let us arrange for trial the other representatives of the hawk family, among which are the Red Tailed Hawk, (*Buteo borealis*,) Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*,) Sparrow Falcon, (*Falco sparverius*,) and the American Osprey, (*Pandion haliaetus*.) The first of these is the largest of our hawks measuring nearly four feet from tip to tip of wings. On close autumn or spring days, less often in summer, it may be seen high in the air wheeling round and round in great circles with slow, easy grace often spreading its fan shaped tail as it makes a sudden turn and often mounting to such a height as to become invisible to the unaided eye.

This is one of the hawks which may be counted among those beneficial for its food consists of mice, rabbits and other small rodents together with grasshoppers, (or locusts,) in their season. Seldom has it been known to take poultry and then only in the stress of great hunger. Although, in Connecticut, they are permanent residents, there is a regular migration movement among them.

A good idea of the effectiveness of hawks as a check upon the undue

increase of insects and rodents may be gained by a study of the feeding habits of the Marsh Hawk. It flies rapidly over the ground, at a low elevation, with quick strokes of its long pointed wings, often throwing them up over its back as it halts for an instant to inspect some brush heaps or stone pile and seldom does a mouse, lizard, grasshopper or frog escape its notice.

Dropping lightly upon its prey it grips it with both talons, and then flies to some prominent perch to tear and devour it, keeping a sharp lookout on both sides.

The large white patch on the rump serves as an excellent field mark when the bird is below the level of the eye. It is the most valuable destroyer of meadow mice which we have, and its young are fed largely upon them together with grasshoppers.

The Osprey, subsisting as it does upon a diet of fish, exerts no harmful influence and may, therefore, be considered neutral.

These great birds frequent the wooded shores of bays, or inland lakes and wheel over the water in wait for fish which they seize with both talons as they plunge completely under the surface. They then bear their prey to some wood or sheltered cliff where they may feast in security. The bones, scales, etc., are rolled into a compact ball by action of the gizzard and disgorged from the mouth.

A study of the feeding habits of this bird together with a laboratory examination of stomach shows that they eat few fish which are of food value.

The little Sparrow Falcon is fairly common throughout its range and on account of its small size, (being only ten inches long,) is often passed over for some other bird. The name

is misleading for although it occasionally takes smaller birds, it subsists largely on grasshoppers, and is the most valuable destroyer of them among our birds. The smaller birds, warblers, finches, vireos, etc., are taken largely during the migrations and then, it seems only when other food is scarce. It is the most brilliantly colored, and in all the most gracefully and airy of the hawks; it seldom swoops or wheels but drops upon its prey from a height a method of capture for which its long silent wings are admirably adapted. When in the air the long tail and rapidly beating, pointed wings are characteristics and on alighting the wings are thrown vertically over the back, a motion common to many of the terns.

The nest is built in a hole in a tree, lined with chips of wood, and upon these the cream-colored, brown speckled eggs are laid. The nestlings are fed almost exclusively upon grasshoppers, crickets and other soft bodied insects until their time of flight from the nest thus assisting the adult in their destruction of these forms.

To conclude,—It has been demonstrated, conclusively, I hope, that of these six species, two are harmful while four are beneficial. Is this not sufficient evidence to exempt them from charges of shot and general abuse? (The beneficial species, of course?)

It is not easy, in many cases extremely difficult, to distinguish between species. Here the difficulty may be met by refusing to shoot those hawks which never venture near the houses or hen-yards. Words are inadequate to express my indignation as I see the hawks being slaughtered in their native wilds.

Wait until the crime has been committed, I say, before punishment is meted out to them.

Leon A. Hansman,  
New Haven, Conn.

## NESTING OF BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.

### *Mniotilta varia.*

In the year 1899, while securing a series of Redstart's eggs in some large woods in Gratiot Township, several Black and White Warblers were observed and a search for their nests was mentally looked for the following season and I was there, ready for business, on May 27. The timber, now cut away, was very dense, particularly where the wind-falls had admitted enough light to permit a second growth, and covered about forty acres of low ground. Up to 3 o'clock the outlook was most discouraging as no Black and White Warblers were seen while the rain poured down in a steady torrent and most of the woods was under water. Aside from the warbler in question, however, many nests were found. I passed about twenty of the Redstart with the birds on and, in a clearing discovered the only set of the Chestnut-sided I have taken while a forty foot climb up a swamp oak disclosed a Cerulean upon her nest. At last my search was rewarded. The location was beneath the roots of a very large elm growing on high ground and clear of undergrowth. Three eggs were in the nest and the fourth on the ground about two feet away where it had probably been rolled by a Cowbird. The nest would never have been discovered had I not caught sight of the egg on the ground which encouraged me to a closer examination. As the birds were not about I would not take the eggs although positive of identity. Returned on the 30th in company with H. Spicer and B. H. Swales and found madam at home. She was a fearless little body, allowing me to take her from the nest. After admiring her

soft and beautifully blended plumage and bold black eyes I released here. She flew to the nearest twig but returned immediately, brim full of indignation, and fluttered about my head, so close at times that I could feel the wind of her wings. The nest was composed of shreds of bark and dead leaves lined with horse hair, inner bark fibres, fine plant stems and bits of dead leaves—the whole placed upon a foundation of dead leaves.

The amount of work attending the search for the above decided me to look for no more nests of the species unless first seeing the birds. This happened on June 3rd when in the same piece of woods and in a portion covered with about a foot of water. I met with a pair whose actions suggested a possible nest. It was found in a crevice between the out-reaching roots of a medium sized elm—the first tree examined—and different from the other nest only in being entirely surrounded by roots, the former having rested upon the ground. The two young warblers and cowbird fluttered out and dropped into the water. This is the only case that has come under my observation where birds so small as warblers have been able to survive in the same nest with a cowbird. The two above nests are the only records of this warbler breeding in the country of Wayne.

J. Claire Wood,  
Detroit, Mich.

---

#### Nesting of the Prairie Horned Lark.

On May 27, 1890 I was crossing a ploughed field when a Prairie Horned Lark flushed from her nest at the base of a furrow almost beneath my descending foot. This was my first nest and the only one upon which I have succeeded in surprising the bird. The eggs were carefully wrapped in a pocket handkerchief and

concealed beneath a bush to be called for later in the day. I forgot to do so, however, and returning two days later was surprised to find them transformed into four live and hungry young. An equal vitality in the eggs of our smaller birds has never since come under my observation but those of many of the water birds possess it. Eggs of the Pied-billed Grebe have hatched in my cabinet three days after they were collected. In the care of the Horned Lark it is probably a necessary provision of nature as the eggs are often deposited very early in the season—long before the snow is off the ground. We will now pass to the season of 1903.

The City of Wyandotte is located twelve miles below Detroit and all the streets running south terminate in a large commons where droves of cattle from the town find excellent pasturage and keep the grass close cropped. Four pairs of larks were noted late in March but I had no time to look for nests until April 6. On that date a female was soon discovered and her movements watched. After walking about, in an aimless sort of way and occasionally pausing to pick up a morsel of food, she suddenly vanished into the earth where the grass was not half an inch high, I started for the spot and was fully fifty feet away when she sprang into the air and flying a few feet commenced feeding with an exhibition of total disregard to my presence. The nest was on high ground and level with the surface. It was composed of dead grass blades, compact on the sides but so flimsy on the bottom that all the eggs more or less rested on the ground. They were four in number and fresh.

I soon had another female under surveillance and later another but after spending three hours with these two birds felt certain they had not

commenced nest building. On April 20th I honored them with another call and an hour each without result and then proceeded to search the commons and found both nests in about thirty minutes. They were on high ground and differed from the first only in more compact construction. One contained three and the other four eggs—all fresh. The fourth and last nest was found May 9th and the four eggs were upon the point of hatching. I was eating luncheon in the shade of a pile of railroad ties when a lark came over the ties and alighted upon the commons. After feeding a short time she returned on the route of her coming out and dropped to the ground behind a pile of brick. As I started toward the spot I caught sight of her on the wing again. She flew to a lump of earth about 100 yards distant and smoothed out her feathers awhile, thence to a high portion of the commons and finally arose high in the air and dropped into a tilled field a quarter of a mile away. I searched the high ground thoroughly but could find no nest and returned to the ties. Something like half an hour later the whole proceedings was repeated to where she arose from behind the brick and alighted upon the lump of earth after which no further attention was paid to her. The nest was quickly found. I had failed to search behind the bricks on the first occasion because the ground was very low and damp and about the last place where one would expect this species to build.

J. Clair Wood,  
Detroit, Mich.

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Some Notes for 1904.

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May 13.—Brown Thrasher (*Harporhynchus rufus*). Nest, containing four very slightly incubated eggs, placed 65½ inches up in top of bro-

ken-down bush, resting on other bushes, all of which were thickly overgrown with green running briars; the entire clump standing about five feet from the edge of marsh on one side of a triangle, the other sides being bound by a freshly ploughed field and much used road, from either of which the nest was not further than thirty feet. Nest of coarse sticks and dry leaves, lined with an abundance of fine roots. Parent birds very restless and uneasy, often approaching within two feet of me, and one perching on the limb. The eggs measure as follows: 1.02x.76, 1.02x.75, 1.01x.74, 1.03x.72.

May 13.—Mocking-bird (*Mimus polyglottos*). Nest, containing four eggs, embryos medium, placed about nine feet from the ground and near the top of small box tree standing in city cemetery; made of sticks, fine roots, leaves, grass, cedar bark and piece of cotton cloth, lined with fine roots, grass and a few horse-tail hairs and feathers. Eggs measure as follows: .97x.73, .93x.74, .94x.73, .96x.73.

May 14.—Brown Thrasher (*Harporhynchus rufus*). Nest, containing four fresh eggs measuring as follows: 1.07x.73, 1.07x.72, 1.02x.74, 1.06x.74; placed about 9 feet from the ground in cedar thickly covered with ivy, standing in city cemetery; made of grass, leaves and stick, lined with fine roots.

May 16.—Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*). Nest containing four slightly incubated eggs showing the following sizes: .58x.49, .65x.49, .58x.47, .57x.48; placed in small gallbury bush, 8 inches above the ground and 35 feet from road; made of grass and weed stalks, lined with very fine grass and hair from the tail of horse.

May 16.—Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*). Nest, containing four fresh eggs measuring as follows: .61x.51, .65x.48, .63x.51, .63x.50; placed nine inches from the ground in small

gallberry bush in open thicket; made of grass and weed stalks, lined with very fine grass and hair from tail of horse.

May 16.—Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*). Nest of grass and weed stalks, lined with very fine grass and horse tail hair, containing five slightly incubated eggs, measuring as follows: .57x.49, .58x.48, .57x.48, .57x.46, .59x.44; placed two inches off the ground in jessamine vines, running on ground between small stream bordered by marsh and freshly ploughed field, and only two feet from small foot-path.

May 17.—Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria Virens*). Nest, of weed stalks, leaves, reed leaves and grass, lined with fine grass, containing four fresh eggs as follows: .82x.62, .81x.63, .84x.63, .83x.63; placed about six feet from the ground in bunch of running briars covering small sweet gum bush within a few yards of constantly used highway near edge of city.

May 18.—White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo noveboracensis*). Nest, of fine strips of bark and reed leaves, firmly bound together with spider webs and fine black moss, lined with fine grass; placed between two horizontal limbs of small huckleberry bush, growing in edge of shallow, heavily wooded pond; nest 26 inches above water.

May 18.—Hooded Warbler (*Sylvania mitrata*). Nest, placed in small myrtle bush, 13 inches from the ground in open part of thicket, made of reed leaves and strips of bark, lined with fine grass, some hair and fine black moss; contents, three fresh eggs measuring as follows: .64x.54, .67x.52, .66x.52.

May 20.—House Wren (*Troglodytes ædon*). Nest containing six fresh eggs measuring as follows: .67x.49, .66x.50, .67x.49, .70x.49, .68x.50, .67x.48; made of stick, roots, strips of cedar bark,

and spider webs, lined with horse hair and feathers; built in tin can 4 3-4 inches long by 4 inches in diameter; placed 28 inches from the ground in bunch of arborvita bushes standing in city cemetery.

May 29.—Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*). Nest, 33 inches from the ground in small maple bush, sup-  
planted on one side by dead bush; in edge of thicket, wooded regularly with large pines, and thickly grown in places with a various growth of small brush and briars; not more than 60 feet from the N. and W. Railroad. Nest of very fine weed stalks, grass, fine bark, and an abundance of spider webs and grass blossoms, lined with fine green moss, feathers and some hair from tail of horse; containing four eggs advanced in incubation, one of which was broken in blowing; the remaining three measure as follows: .58x.43, .58x.44, .60x.43. Identified by Prof. Ridgway, Washington, and Smithsonian Institution.

June 8.—House Wren (*Troglodytes ædon*). Nest, containing five slightly incubated eggs measuring as follows: .66x.50, .67x.50, .65x.48, .67x.50, .67x.51; built in tin sprinkler, 8 inches long by 5½ inches in diameter, hanging on nail driven in trunk of cedar, about 7 feet from the ground, standing in city cemetery; nest built almost to top of sprinkler of small dead cedar limbs, with slight nest of cedar bark, lined with feathers, cast-off snake skins and hair from tail of horse.

June 17.—Green-crested Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*). Nest of Spanish moss, dead moss and fine weed stalks, the two last forming something of a lining; placed in small fork near end of swinging, horizontal limb of beech, about 10½ feet from the ground and 9 feet from trunk of tree, in thick, dark, heavily wooded forest, only a few hundred feet from large swamp. Eggs measure as follows: .75x.54, .74x.53, .74x.52.

R. P. SMITHWICK,  
Norfolk, Va.

### About those Large Sets of Robins.

Mayville, N. Y.,  
Friend Short:—

In regard to large sets of Robin of more than 4 eggs there was one set of 1-5 went to Friend Lattin beside the set 1-7.. I also saw a nest last season 1906 with 3 young and two eggs piped and this was within a few rods of where I took the set of 5 eggs altho that was several years ago. This pair might have been a descendant from those, as they like their old places for nesting, and where a bird has some peculiar mark on a few white feathers so you can identify you are quite likely to see them back to the same old place.

I am very resp'y,

A. E. Kibbe.

My Dear Mr. Short:—

The article in the March Oologist about large sets of Robin eggs by Mr. Brooks appealed to me to such an extent that I desire to add my testimony. I too have looked into every Robin's nest discovered in the hopes of finding a rare set of 5 or six eggs. During twenty years of careful observance I have been fortunate enough to find but one containing more than the regular number of four eggs. This set containing five eggs and I recorded it years ago in the old Nidologist as a rare find. I have had unlimited opportunities to study the nesting of "Merula" because of its very abundance in central Illinois. The Robin besides being here in great numbers is uncommonly domestic. Each season they nest on our porch posts and within reaching distance of windows, affording excellent opportunities for close study.

It is certainly a fixed habit for our Robins at least to deposit but four eggs, and it is only fair to add that in the single case of a larger set on

my records, I have real doubt as to the fifth being a brother or sister to the others. I have always been suspicious that the fifth egg might have been deposited by another female whose home was not quite ready for occupancy, for the egg was of slightly different form. Collectors don't write to me for large Robin's eggs for I cannot find them.

Isaac E. Hess,

Philo, Ill.

Editor Oologist:—

In reply to the article of Mr. L. Brooks of Milton, Mass., in the March Oologist, I would like to say I have seen only one set of more than four robins eggs in all my collecting experience which extends over a period of seventeen years.

The robin, in this locality is by far the commonest native breeder, and I have examined more than a hundred nests.

On May 21, 1906, I discovered a robin's nest in an orchard near a farm house. It was built in a large crotch of a cherry tree, 15 feet up and contained five eggs, one-fourth incubated. The eggs are smaller than usual, measuring respectively: 1.04x .81, 1.06x.80, 1.03x.80, 1.03x.79, 1.05x .77. There is no doubt of the identity as I pushed the bird from the nest.

B. R. Bales, M. D.

Circleville, O.

### A Question.

Dear Sir:—

Last year May 12, I found a red-headed woodpecker's nest containing nine eggs. Five of the nine were heavily incubated and the remaining four were fresh. These eggs I suppose were laid by two birds.

Isaac Van Kamnen.

Ans.:—Very probable. This is not common with Red-head but quite so with flicker. —Ed.

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VOL. XXIV. No. 6.

ALBION, N. Y., JUNE, 1907.

WHOLE No. 239

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 6.

ALBION, N. Y. JUNE, 1907.

WHOLE No. 239

## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXIDERMISTRY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

Correspondence and items of interest to the student of Birds, their Nests and Eggs, solicited from all.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,  
Chill, Monroe Co., N. Y.

## BRIEF NOTES ON THE SWAMP SPARROW.

By Richard F. Miller.

The interesting notes of Thomas Semmes, Jr., in the September Oölogist regarding the Swamp Sparrow

attracted my attention, inasmuch as I am collecting data pertaining to the nidification and other habits of this species, having made it a subject for monographic study. His statement of nests being lined with horse-hair causes me to ask whether he is positive such nests were not the Song Sparrow and the Swamp living species? The nests of both these species of *Melospiza* are greatly similar in constructive and composition but I have yet to see a nest of Swamp Sparrow lined with hair or any other sort of material save grass and I have found and have descriptions in my note books of several hundred nests. The eggs of both species are often alike and the novice is apt to confuse them, though to the advanced oölogist there is different in shell texture, the shell of the Swamp Sparrow being thin and brittle.

Mr. Semmes, Jr., says he never found a set of six eggs. I have never heard of this species laying more than five eggs. Has anybody collected sets of six laid by the same bird? I would be very glad to hear of such sets. Some authorities credit the Swamp Sparrow as laying three or four eggs only. However sets of five are not common I may say that this number of eggs is found but once out of every ten or twelve sets I have found. Four is the uniform number of eggs laid, very seldomless.

Concerning Mr. Semmes' remarks about the destruction of many of their eggs and nests, which he thinks would cause a decrease in the

bird's number annually. At a locality north of the city of Philadelphia during the past four years I have robbed the Swamp Sparrow heavily, collecting all the nests with sets in them I could find (and I don't exaggerate when I say I know how to and do find them,) and can positively say that this wholesale (?) robbery has not caused a decrease in the birds numbers. Quite the contrary, and the cause is obvious when I mention that I have never molested a second nest, which they build after the destruction or taking of their first. Rob the birds of their first and subsequent broods and in a year or two will be seen a noticeable decrease in their numbers.

The Swamp Sparrow must nest latter in Chesterfield, Va., than in the vicinity of Philadelphia, for fresh sets after June 5 here are quite difficult to find, referring of course to the first sets.

In conclusion to these brief remarks I would say that I should be very glad to receive any information sent to me or contributed to the Oologist regarding the nidification and other habits of the Swamp Sparrow, such material of any valuable will be used by me in my contemplated paper on the monograph of the Swamp Sparrow and due credit given to all whose data I may use.

October 25, 1906.

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### BEFRIEND SWALLOW; KILL THE SPARROW.

---

**This is the Only Salvation of the  
United States Cotton Crop.**

Washington, May 13.—The government is asking people all over the country to make war on the English sparrow and to put up bird houses and bore holes under the eaves of the barns to encourage the swallow.

This measure is made imperative in order that the cotton industry of the United States may not be destroyed.

All insect-eating birds are of immense value to the farmer and the forester, but it has been discovered by the government bug experts that there is no bird equal to the swallow. Particularly is this true in the matter of the insect which is destroying the cotton plantations of the south.

The boll weevil, despite every effort to stay its march, is spreading at the rate of about 50 miles a year and sooner or later it is said that it is certain to infest the entire cotton producing area—a fact which not only seriously concerns the southern planter, but in its ultimate consequences affects the well being of the whole country.

The aid of the north is required, as most of the swallows spend part of the season in the northern states and in many cases do their nesting there. The bird is disappearing, however, because the English sparrow harries him and kills his young by the thousands.

Various methods of exterminating the English sparrow are recommended by the department. Most of them consist in the use of poisoned grain.

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### QUESTIONS, NOTES AND COMMENTS.

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Warren, Pa., May 26, '07.

Editor "Oologist,"

Dear Sir:—

The past winter was rather tame. At no time did we have over a foot of snow although there was considerable cold weather. Although not unusually severe it brought a large flight of white-winged crossbills and a good many grosbeaks.

The crossbills came early. A few put in an appearance in late October

and rapidly increased in numbers until by the middle of November they were common in flocks throughout the mountains. One flock that was seen early in December must have contained fully 300. About camps in the woods they were tame, coming up within a few feet of the men. About the middle of January they had reached the height of their abundance and from then on their numbers grew less until March 8th, when I saw the last. Toward the last of their stay they came onto bare places on the ground where the snow had melted off and could then be easily approached to within a dozen feet. They fed entirely on the small cones of the hemlocks.

The first grosbeaks were seen on Thanksgiving Day (November 29th) while enjoying a little chase with the hounds. Our bag that day consisting of 1 bob-cat, 4 white rabbits (Varying Hares) 1 grouse and a pine grosbeak. From then on flocks and single birds were met with. The latter part of January they were most common. Jan. 24th the coldest day of the winter (Therm. 20 below) I found a flock of fully 100. From then on they rapidly became scarcer until Feb. 13th when the last were seen. About 1 out of 15 was a fine male in beautiful red plumage. They fed almost entirely on the mountain-ash, occasionally they were found budding on maples. Both male grosbeaks and male white-wings were fine songsters. Canada Nuthatches also wintered rather commonly. There were a few Northern Shrikes and I saw 1 Goshawk but no Snowy Owls. On the river in the open places quite a few Am. Mergansers and Golden-eyes wintered. Saw one Holobells Grebe on March 1st.

Quite a few red foxes and six fine cross foxes were shot near here during the winter, also quite a few wild-

cats and late in the fall several bears. We have had a very late spring. All migrants are much later than usual. Ducks were plenty during the latter part of April. Swans were seen twice late in March but none were taken. Saw a common Tern May 20th first spring record.

To-day I was in the woods for a couple of hours and took a beautiful set of 5 sharp-shinned hawks. This nest was only 20 feet up in a young hemlock and was the easiest hawks nest to reach I ever found. I saw several Winter Wrens in a ravine but could not locate a nest. All the warblers seen seemed to be on the move and had no notion apparently of settling down yet.

Would like to hear from others about the grosbeak and crossbills. Would like to know if it was a general flight throughout Western New York and Pennsylvania. Hoping this may prove of interest to some of the readers of the "Oologist" I remain

Your sincerely

R. B. Simpson.

Warren, Warren Co., Pa.

Toledo, O.

Ernest H. Short.

Dear Sir:—

I wish to report the finding of the Cory Least Bittern *Ardetta neoxena* in Ohio (Toledo.) On May 22, 1907, Mr. Wm. P. Holt and myself saw it first with other Least Bitterns in a small pond near the marshes of the bay shore. He saw it again on May 23 and on May 25 took the specimen, a fine male. This is I think the first record of this rare bird for the State of Ohio.

Your truly,

A. C. Read.

Strawberry Point, Iowa.

What is this? and is it of any value? Caught in a mouse trap in

the house, a perfect mouse in every way but the head, which resembles a mole only nose is longer and ears down on the neck. It is small. I have mounted it.

O. M. Greenwood.

L. C.—Oneida Co., N. Y.

The Bi-colored and Tri-colored Blackbirds do not occur in New York State. Your specimen must have been the common Redwing. They vary much in the shoulder markings.—Ed.

New Bedford, Mass.

To the Editor of the Oologist."

Dear Sir:—

A week or so ago the writer thought he would visit the woods and place a birch stub with a hole in it on a tree so that the chickadees might use it if they saw fit and so that I could study their ways and watch them bring up their little family. To-day I went to ascertain if they had favored me with a visit and found to my great delight that Mrs. Chickadee was at home and had four eggs. Upon turning around to return; not more than 10 feet away, up flew a Woodcock nearly under my feet and looking in the ground I discovered the nest with four pure white eggs not a spot on them except a few slight stains from the damp leaves (as we have had so much rain.) Now all the authorities that I have seen say the eggs are buff with brownish or lavender spots and are hard to find as they are nearly the color of the leaves. These eggs being so white I had no difficulty whatever in seeing them after the bird flew off. The eggs and nest are now in my collection and are prized by me as they are the first set of Woodcocks that I ever found.

Will you kindly inform me if it is unusual for them to be immaculate?

There are a trifle larger than Screech Owl's but not much, and are somewhat pointed like Bob-white. Nest was made close to a birch stick lying on the ground.

Henry P. Burt.

This is the first immaculate, Albino set of Woodcock I have seen recorded.—Ed.

Luzerne Co., Pa.

Are sets of 5 of Prairie Horned Lark rare? State.

E. W. C.

Ans.—No, quite common.—Ed.

### THE MOURNING DOVE.

(*Zenaidura macroura*.)

With the exception of the Passenger Pigeon which is now almost extinct this is the only member of this family that we have in the east, north of the Gulf and South Atlantic states. At all seasons it is gregarious but never in such large flocks as the far famed pigeons of old. This beautiful yet dull colored bird arrives early in March although my earliest records about Toledo is March 25. In this state (Ohio) the season for hunting Doves opens September 1, which is too early, for while passing through a clump of arbor-vitae trees on September 7, 1905 I thought that I would look at a certain nest of the Dove that I had found in April; imagine my surprise to find it occupied by two young and yet it was a week after the season had opened. From the farmer's point of view the Mourning Dove is one of the most useful of all the birds on the farm. It feeds a great deal upon weed seeds such as pigeon grass, rag weed, etc. According to the report of the Department of Agriculture more than 99 per cent. of the food of this dove is vegetable matter and less 1 per cent. animal.

The animal matter is supposed to be only the weevils or worms contained in the seeds. The dove generally raises two or three broods a season but only two birds are raised at a time. The eggs are pure white and average about 1.12x0.82.

The nesting season begins early in April and continues until September or even later in the fall. Of the nine nests of the Mourning Dove that I found during the season of 1905, the highest was 20 feet from the ground and lowest was 3 feet. All but two were in evergreen or arbor-vitæ trees and those two were in apple trees.

The first nest was found on April 15, and was situated in an apple tree about 10 feet from the ground. The nest consisted of just a few straws laid across the rim of a deserted robin's nest. It contained the incomplete set of one egg.

The second, was found on April 22, in an arbor-vitæ, three feet from the ground and contained 2 eggs.

No. 3, on the following Saturday, April 29, about three feet from the ground, containing 1 egg.

No. 4, was found on May 7, about 20 feet from the ground which is the highest yet found by me. It also contained 1 egg.

No. 5, on May 7, also, eight feet from the ground. This was the smallest dove's nest that I ever saw and was scarcely as large as the palm of my hand. It contained two young but a few days old.

Nov. 6, On May 27, 6 feet from the ground, 1 egg.

No. 7, May 27, 4½ feet from the ground, 2 eggs.

No. 8, was found July 15, about 12 feet from the ground on the horizontal limb of an apple tree and contained 1 young ready to fly.

No. 9, and the last of the season was found on September 7, six feet

from the ground and contained 2 young.

All of these nests were found near Rossford just outside the city limits of Toledo except No. 8, which was at Round Lake, Mich.

During 1906, very few field trips were made in the nesting season and hence only four Mourning Doves' nest were found.

No. 1, April 18, in arbor-vitæ 10 feet from the ground, 2 young.

No. 2, April 21, in thorn tree 8 ft. from the ground, 2 eggs.

No. 3, April 28, in arbor-vitæ 8 feet from the ground. It was built on a Robin's nest and contained no eggs.

No. 4, May 12, in arbor-vitæ 5 feet from the ground, 2 eggs.

A. C. Read,  
Toledo, O.

---

#### ▲ Trip to Cholame, Calif.

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One bright sunny day in March a friend and myself started out on a collecting trip. We left Shandon using a horse and buggy for conveyance as we intended to go till we found some good eggs. The first nest we found was a Western Red Tail having 1 egg which we left. We kept going until we came to an Eagle's nest. We found the bird on the nest. My friend climbed to the nest to find one egg. I knew of another eagle's nest 2 miles above that one. We could see the eagle on the nest when we arrived there. My friend shinned up to find two of the prettiest eggs we have ever seen, which Mr. Taylor has in his large collection. We compared them with his Eagle Series to find them about the prettiest in his Series.

A month after I found another set in the second nest, very much nicer than the first set, a set that is very hard to beat in beauty. I have taken several sets of Prairie Falcon here,

and Pacific Horned Owl, Red-bellied Hawk and Desert Sparrow-hawk but a friend of mine let me have one of the nicest sets of Desert Sparrow-hawk I have ever seen. I took 3 nice sets of Am. Raven the first being a set of 5, the second a set of 5, and the third a set of 4, all being fresh eggs.

I am hoping to get out this fall to see some of my old bird chums, being my only chance, as collecting starts here early in March. I will now mention the Prairie Falcon again. I started out to get an inaccessible nest of Prairie Falcon taking two boys, one about 13, the other 14 years old. When we arrived there the bird being on the nest, I climbed up the side of the rock, and tied a rope to a hole in the rock and lowered my rope down over a hundred feet the young boy, being an expert, climbed down had the eggs, and was down in 40 minutes after he started up. The eggs were fresh, but one being broken on the road home left an incomplete set of four.

If any of you bird friends have taken the eggs of this Falcon you know the danger one runs in getting them.

F. Truesdale.

Editor Oologist:—

Your comment on Mr. Reinecke's article concerning the Nesting of the Great Blue Heron in New York see Dec. '06 Oologist, is susceptible of misconstruction. It is possible that your comment may be understood as indicating; that sets of eggs of the Blue Heron in the North are normally. Three and Four in number; and that the eggs are relatively large of size.

It is doubtful if this induction holds good. I have never heard of a set of Six Eggs as having been taken in the West; while the normal would seem to lie in sets of Four and of Five. As to sizes it would be both

of interest and value if collectors would carefully measure sets of Southern-collected and of Northern-taken sets of the Great Blue Heron in their possession; and then report, concertedly, to the Oologist as to results covering both the lines of data in question.

P. B. Peabody,  
Blue Rapids, Kan.

Ans.—Sorry this was subject to such misconstruction. Just the opposite was intended. Sets of Tex. and Fla. eggs passing through my hands have usually run 3 or 4 eggs of large average size. Northern sets have run up to 5 and 6 eggs and apparently averaging smaller.

As a partial test we measured the first sets 2-3 from Texas that we came to. Average  $2.65 \times 1.85$  hundredths. The first sets 2-5 we struck one from New York and one from Utah measured average of  $2.47 \times 1.79$ . Nothing alarming in difference but to stand off and look a series it looks more than that.—Ed.

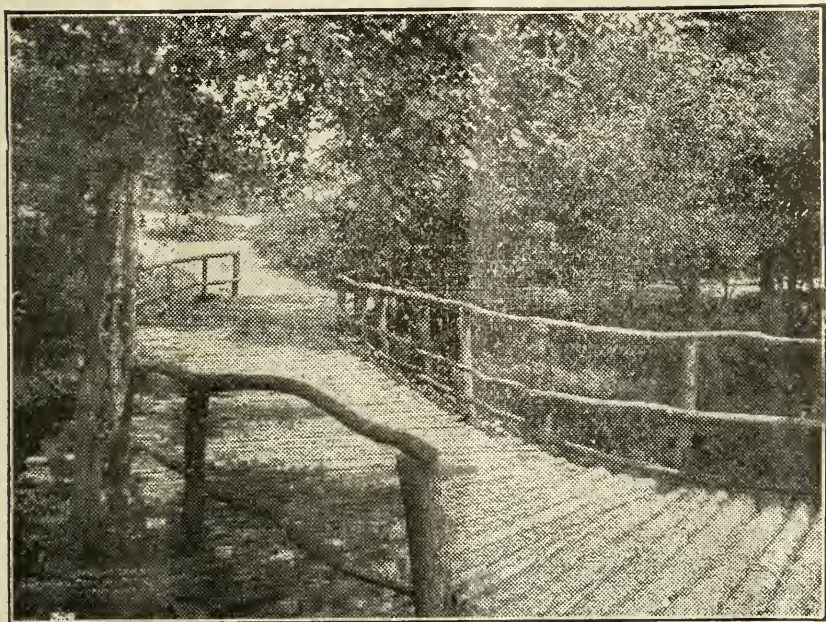
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#### REMINISCENCES OF BIRD-LIFE AT CAMP ALGER, VA.

By B. S. Bowdish.

Recently while looking over some old papers, I came across some notes prepared for a brief paper on the birds noted while in camp during the summer of 1898, at Falls Church, Va., and as these notes refer to bird-life under rather peculiar conditions, I combined that they might still be worth publishing.

I believe that the army gathered at Camp Alger was some thing like 16,000, and it may be readily understood that the proximity of this multitude did not tend to increase the number of birds in that region. The opportunities for observation which I enjoyed, were confined to the small area of the Third New York Volun-



Rustic Bridge, Jamestown Exposition.

teer camp, save when in battalion drill we skirmished over the adjacent country, and through the woods. The list of birds follows:

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*.) Noted a number of times flying over camp, at some height.

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*.) One seen near camp.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*.) One noted flying over.

Green Heron (*Butorides vivescens*.) Several seen near camp.

Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*.) One or two near camp.

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*.) Not uncommon.

Killderr (*Oxyechus vociferus*.) Abundant in the fields around camp.

Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*.) Abundant in woods close by.

Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus crourea*.) Quite common.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*.) Abundant.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*.) Common.

Coopers Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*.) A few noted.

Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*.) A fairly common bird.

American Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*.) Common about camp.

Screech Owl (*Megascops asio*.) Often heard at night about camp.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*.) Quite common.

Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*.) A few seen.

Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*.) A few.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus pubescens*.) Common.

Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*.) A few noted.

Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates*

picus varius.) Noted one specimen in July.

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*.) Common.

Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*.) Abundant.

Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*.) On some evenings the clear call of this bird rang from side to side of the camp, and was picked up and re-echoed in every direction.

Nighthawk (*Chordeiles virginianus*.) Very common.

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*.) Abundant.

Ruby-throated Humingbird (*Trochilus colubris*.) One or two noted.

Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*.) Fairly common.

Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*.) A few noted.

Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*.) Common.

Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virens*.) A few noted.

Prairie Horned Lark (*Otocoris alpestris praticola*.) A number observed.

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*.) Very common.

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*.) Common.

Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*.) A few noted.

Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*.) Common.

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*.) Common.

Bronzed Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula æneus*.) Common.

Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*.) A few noted.

American Goldfinch (*Astragalinus tristis*.) Common.

Vesper Sparrow (*Poocætes gramineus*.) Abundant.

Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella socialis*.) Abundant.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza cinerea melodia*.) Abundant.

Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*.) A few.

Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*.) Common. Birds were feeding young close to camp.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Zamelodia*.) One or two noted.

Indigo Bunting (*Cyanospiza cyanea*.) A few noted.

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*.) A number bred in bird boxes on poles in camp.

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon lunifrons*.)

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo erythrogaster*.)

Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*.)

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*.) These four species, separately and associated, were seen frequently about camp.

White-rumped Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*.) Shrikes, supposed to belong to this species, were frequently seen about camp.

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*.) Common.

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*.) One noted.

Black and White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*.) One seen.

Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*.) Common.

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*.) One noted.

Catbird (*Galeoscoptes carolinensis*.) Common. Noted set three partially incubated eggs late in July.

Brown Creeper (*Certhia familiaris americana*.) One seen.

White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*.) Common.

Tufted Titmouse (*Bæolophus bicolor*.) Abundant and interesting, as usual.

Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*.) Common.

Wilson's Thrush (*Hyloichla fuscescens*.) A few seen.

American Robin (*Merula migratoria*.) A few seen.

Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*.) Very abundant.

## A Suggestion.

Dear Mr. Short:—

Here is a suggestion. Suppose you would make an editorial remark in the Oologist, regarding all advertisers and also the Oologists in their letters for exchange to use the List Numbers in rotation, as: 1 1-5, 40½, 406 1-6, 501 1-5, etc., and not have 726 1-5, 54½, 320½, 6 1-6, 610¼, etc. It will save a great deal of time and annoyance. I am positive that you'll do all collectors a good turn.

With kind regards,

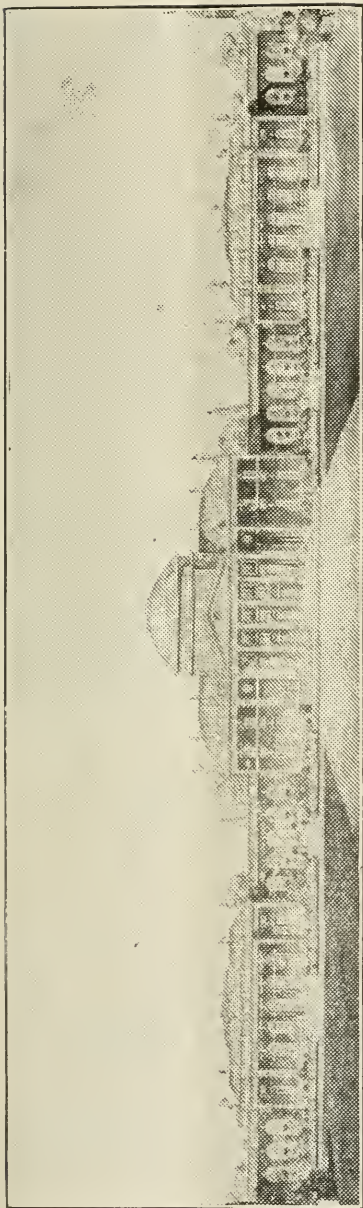
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Ottomar Reinecke.

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BY CHESTER A. REED, S. B.

Author of North American Birds Eggs, and with Frank M. Chapman of Color Key to North American Birds  
Editor of the American Bird Magazine.

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VOL. XXIV. No. 7.

ALBION, N. Y., JULY, 1907.

WHOLE No. 240

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245 " " " " Dec., 1907  
257 " " " " Dec., 1908

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 7.

ALBION, N. Y. JULY, 1907.

WHOLE No. 240

## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-  
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
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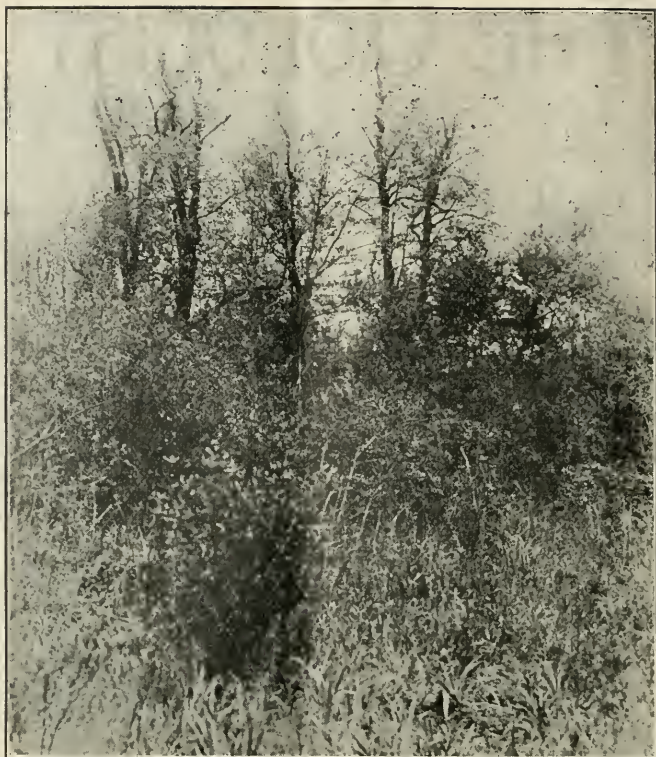
### AMONG THE WOODCOCK.

The spring season about northern portions of Indiana and Illinois was very backward this year, and Southern Wisconsin and Michigan experienced the same conditions. March

days were extremely fickle, some being quite balmy, and others very stormy and inclement.

April, about Chicago, was ushered in with cool lake breezes prevailing, and the entire month was typical of early March weather. Migration was very backward and I imagined the American Woodcock not to be nesting until the temperature moderated a little, though they are an extremely hardy bird. I usually make my initial search for their nests at the close of the first week in April, but it was after the 15th inst., this year, before I visited their haunts. Like the craftsman or deer hunter, who immediately recognizes signs of his game upon entering their domains, I felt that I was not at all too early for eggs of this interesting Wader. I recognized certain signs about the brush that were of considerable significance, but all I could discover was an empty egg shell which some Jay or Crow had evidently carried from the nest of the Woodcock, and devoured the contents, while leisurely perched on a fallen limb. I hunted faithfully, but could not discover the nest, yet the birds were in evidence.

April 20th, found me in a large place resorted to by several pairs, of these birds, annually. I started to make a thorough canvas of the poplar, willow, hazel, ash and Sumach bushes standing in patches over a territory quite moist and springy. Presently I espied an incubating bird covering four eggs, situated in a slight depression beside a little log. This disclosure was followed by an unusual experience, viz., the detection of another Woodcock



Nesting Site of Woodcock, Channel Lake, Ind. Photo by G. A. Abbott, May 30, 1906.

Mr. Abbott furnished us a nearer view showing Mrs. Philchela in outline sitting on nest with one bright eye plainly visible.

Received it too late to use with this article. [Ed.]

sitting on four beauties among fallen limbs, not forty feet away from the first nest. Never before, had I witnessed such an example of sociability on the part of these birds.

April 23rd, I was on the ground of a densely covered area, comprising large timber with second growth bordering it on various sides. After one and a half hours search, a parent was observed on a nest of four dark eggs, perfectly fresh. I was confident that another pair was occupying the same underbrush, but could not prove my apprehension until several weeks later

when I chanced upon a nest from which the young had just emerged. This was a little disappointing (to me,) though probably very gratifying, to the bird, who must have witnessed my searching for her, several weeks previous.

A companion of the opposite sex, who is ornithologically inclined, accompanied me to the woodlands on the balmy morning of April 28th. She was taking migration notes, when I suggested looking for the 'Owl among Snipe' as we were among his native retreats. Leaving my friend in an ele-

vated position, I ventured into a portion of the swamp where progress is laborious, unless equipt with garments that are impregnable against briars and fallen branches. A few minutes elapsed, before my companion was summoned to a thicket where the soberly outlined figure of a *Philohela minor* was visible under the shelter of a projecting shrub. The nest was on a slight knoll of leaves and contained four slightly incubated eggs.

Six days later, I was lured to another "cover," consisting mostly of hazel and willow brush. I disturbed a male woodcock and within a radius of one hundred yards, the mate was "squatting" 'neath a sheltered bunch of twigs midst a tall growth of poplar. The bird vacated her nest under protest, revealing four long pointed eggs with markings of subdued brown, chiefly about the larger end.

Many of the places selected by the Woodcock for breeding purposes are apt to be burned over, cut down, or pastured.

The next day was spent in a locality frequented by cattle. In a portion of this timber where dead branches and stalks were conspicuous, I discovered four very dark eggs of the Woodcock lying under a fallen branch, with a space not to exceed one inch between the eggs and limb, which was lying horizontally over the nest. It is my impression that some domestic animal in wedging its way through this tangle had broken off the limb which had fallen upon the sitting bird. The Woodcock in the struggle to extricate herself from this predicament undoubtedly kicked the eggs rather vigorously, as they were slightly imperfect, from claw marks. After blowing them, I managed to prepare three good specimens out of the set.

'Tis a frequent occurrence for incubating Woodcocks while springing from their nests, to disturb the eggs,

so that they roll about quite conspicuously for a few seconds after the bird has been flushed.

During the middle of April, several old Woodcocks were encountered with young, showing they had been undaunted by the severe dampness, which caused some formation of ice and snow.

It was well into the month of May and ordinarily far too late to expect anything in the way of Woodcocks less advanced; than partially fledged young but I had an intuition that one pair were lingering about a little tract of timber. I investigated this section on May 11th, and after a prolonged hunt, about concluded I had entertained a wrong conception regarding the situation. I had caught a glimpse of a male that was dozing on the mellow soil among some little bushes and could not content myself with the feeling that he was a bachelor. In exploring every little clumb of grass and pile of brush I finally noticed two freshly laid eggs slightly buried among the fallen leaves after the manner of a wild duck, who covers her eggs until she is ready to "sit." With some difficulty this copse was marked and upon making a second trip a few days later, I found the parent at home. This nest was situated in an ideal spot and the eggs were more beautiful than any I had previously found during the season. The back ground is a dark rusty brown and the markings are innumerable spots of deep red.

Gerard Alan Abbott,

Chicago, Illinois.

The author begs leave to announce that his "Catalogue of the Erycinidae of the World," with the synonymy brought down to Oct. 1904, is now running through press and will be ready for distribution some time during May.

As the edition will be limited, gentlemen and librarians who are interested



Second Set of Woodcock at close range. Taken at Channel Lake, Ind.,  
May 30, 1906 by G. A. Abbott.

are requested to send their intentions to subscribe for copies of the Catalogue, to the author.

Price \$2.00 net.

Address all orders, communications, etc., to the author.

Levi W. Mengel,  
Boys' High School,  
Reading, Pa.

---

### THE ENGLISH SPARROW.

---

From Prof. Estabrook of Clark Univ. we have received a reprint from the "Auk," Vol. XXIV, No. 2.; that is of sufficient interest to warrant using it in full as below. It is self-explanatory.

Editorially we would endorse, as we practice, the most drastic measures.

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#### The Present Status of the English Sparrow Problem in America.

By A. H. Estabrook.

The English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*,) was introduced into the United States in the fall of 1850. The first few pairs were liberated at Brooklyn, N. Y. In the few years then following, many others were liberated at different cities in the United States, so that by 1875, they had spread over practically the whole area east of the Mississippi. From the time of its introduction, there was a storm of protest from the practical naturalists who foresaw the result of its introduction, from its behavior in other countries. They knew its record in countries where it had been a longer resident. The people who introduced the sparrow believed that it would be an insectivorous bird, and would take care of the canker worm which was then troubling the people very much. The canker worm is no longer a pest, but its destruction by the sparrow is not granted by the ornithologists. E. H. Forbush, in his report on the Gypsy

moth states that the sparrow has been seen to eat all forms of the moth, but that the bird itself is more injurious than beneficial inasmuch as the sparrow drives away the native birds which would hold the pest in check. Dr. Elliott Coues made, in 1880, an urgent appeal to the people to exterminate the English Sparrow for the following reasons.

1...They do not perform the work for which they were imported.

2. They attack, harass, fight, drive away, and kill native birds, much more insectivorous than themselves.

In 1889 the United States Department of Agriculture published a 400-page volume on the English Sparrow in America. This work takes up the economic status of the English Sparrow, its food relations, and its behavior with other birds. An amazing amount of evidence against the sparrow is gathered here and the author of the bulletin advises the extermination of the sparrow all over the United States.

In April, 1906, the following questionnaire was printed in these publications: 'The Auk,' 'Bird-Lore,' 'American Bird Magazine,' 'The Oologist,' and 'Maine Sportsman.'

Circular of Inquiry with Reference to the Present Status of the English Sparrow Problem in America.

1. Are you familiar with Bulletin No. 1, The English Sparrow in America, published by the Agricultural Department in 1889; and do you agree with the facts there presented and with its conclusions?

2. Are English Sparrows present in your locality? If so, are they increasing or decreasing in numbers?

3. What is being done with you to exterminate them? Please outline methods which you deem effective.

4. What influence have you observed the English Sparrow to have upon native birds?

5. Would public opinion in your locality favor the adoption of effective measures to exterminate the species?

6. Please state the facts and arguments, pro and con, which decide this problem in your mind. Please send replies as early as possible—before June 1—to the undersigned. It is hoped to gather a consensus of opinion from all parts of this Country and Canada. The data will be published as soon as possible.

Signed.

March 5, 1906. A. H. Estabrook,  
Clark University, Worcester, Mass.

From this questionnaire and from letters sent out by me personally, I have received about eighty answers. I also wrote to all the Experiment Stations in the United States, and to prominent ornithologists in Canada. The answers practically all agree that the English Sparrow is an obnoxious bird to our native population. Several letters state that we have no right morally, to kill the English Sparrow, or any other living creature. But it must be plain to anyone that we have as much right to kill a bird that is generally considered obnoxious, as we have to kill mice, rats, fleas, mosquitoes, bedbugs, and the like. This standpoint of false humanitarianism is derided in most emphatic terms in many of my letters.

I will take up the questions in the order in which they appear in the enquiry, and will endeavor to give the main results secured by the questionnaire.

1. Are you familiar with Bulletin No. 1, etc. This was inserted in the questionnaire to see if the bulletin referred to, had, to any great extent, been circulated through the country, and also to see if it had had any marked effect on the ideas of the people in regard to the sparrow. A good por-

tion had seen the bulletin and most of those agreed with it perfectly.

2. Is the English Sparrow present in your locality? Increasing or decreasing?

The data for the distribution of the sparrow I have secured from the Directors of the different Experiment Stations, and from the prominent ornithologists in Canada. The English Sparrow exists in enormous numbers in the whole region east of the Rocky Mountains; with the exception of Florida, where it is found in a few places, and in Texas, Oklahoma, and the northern part of Montana where it is reported absent. West of the Rockies he is reported in Utah, Colorado, and in and about San Francisco, and Portland, Oregon. It is found throughout Canada, south of latitude 50°, and as far west as the Rockies. It does not seem to be either increasing or decreasing its numbers to any appreciable extent anywhere in this area.

3. What is being done with you to exterminate them? Outline methods.

In a great many localities, much is being done towards extermination; nearly one half of those answering were doing something to hold them in check, but as these few are scattered throughout the country, no lasting, permanent effect is secured. The methods used are mostly that of poisoned grain, destroying nests and young, and shooting.

4. What influence have you observed the English Sparrow to have upon native birds?

The influence of the sparrow upon native birds is the crucial point in this discussion. It is not a question of how many insects it eats; it is whether our native birds would be better off without the intruder or not. There were two people, who liked to see the bird about in winter, when the other birds were away. A larger number honestly believed that the

bird was doing a good service in the eating of weed seed. These few, however, admitted that the English Sparrow did attack and harass other birds. The rest of the letters were against the sparrow. Many give personal experiences of the sparrows' pugnacity and plead for a sure and certain method to get rid of the species. Others are up and doing and are killing off thousands each year, by poison and the gun. I will quote here three extracts:

"I have frequently observed that the English Sparrow chased the Robins off the State College Campus (Harrisburgh,) and last year at my residence on the Penn. State College, I saw a male sparrow kill and drop from the nest four young Pewees, about a week or two old. The parents which are recognized as being among the most insectivorous birds, were entirely helpless in the presence of the intruder and destroyer of their young."—H. H. Surface, Pa.

"Have seen them rob Bluebirds' nests, drive away Robins, Wrens, and Crested Flycatchers."—H. Link, Indiana.

"The Purple Martins long disputed the possession of their boxes with the sparrows but eventually were compelled to give them at least half the compartments in each box. The Swallows and Bluebirds were driven out nearly altogether for many years, but of recent years have made increased use of the boxes. The Purple Martins are practically gone, and I doubt if the Bluebirds or Swallows would be allowed to nest, if the sparrows occupying the boxes were not turned out and their nests destroyed, as I have been in the habit of doing."—James H. Fleming, Toronto, Canada.

5. Would public opinion in your locality favor the adoption of effective measures to exterminate the species?

Public opinion, in many localities,

would favor extermination, but in many places, so-called humanitarians were, and are, still bitterly opposed to sparrow destruction, as in Boston in 1889. But the greater portion of the letters report communities to be entirely indifferent and difficult to arouse to any definite action. As is always the case, a pest must become overwhelming, before the general public will pay the slightest heed.

6. State facts and arguments, pro and con, which decide this problem in your mind.

Two letters used the argument that it was cruel to kill any living thing, no matter how good the reason, basing it on the point that the other animals had as much right to live as we had. It was also wrong to teach boys to kill things as it made them cruel. The great majority of writers were thinking of the great danger to our native birds, and this was a sufficient cause to demand extermination.

In Canada the consensus of opinion is the same as in the United States. But there the winters are more severe and so the bird does not attain to so great numbers but shows there, as here, the same fighting qualities that have made him most inimical to our native species.

There are several methods of extermination feasible; destroying nests and young, shooting, and by poisoning. The poisoned grain is prepared by dissolving  $\frac{1}{8}$  ounce of strychnine sulphate in one half pint of boiling water. Pour this while hot over two quarts of cracked corn or wheat, stirring well until all the liquid is absorbed. Dry thoroughly, without scorching, and put away labelled. One kernel of this prepared grain will kill a sparrow. Great care must be used with this, and it should be used only when our other granivorous birds are away.

The English Sparrow, or House Sparrow as it is sometimes called, has been a pest in every country in which it has been introduced. At present in New Zealand the people are obliged to take the most drastic measures to exterminate them. They had become so extremely numerous that concerted action became necessary and was demanded by the people, who are now slowly exterminating them. A special officer was appointed in each county, whose sole duty it was to carry on this work. The expense to be borne by a special tax levied on each county. In Australia, the sparrow is increasing to extraordinary numbers and the people are up in arms against it. As the agricultural interests there are involved, the time seems ripe for action. The sparrow is an exotic species to America, and following the law of introduced species, has become a pest and the time is sure to come when the people will demand extermination. When the whole country, or a great section of the country, comes to a definite decision in the matter, then is the time for all to work together and to clean out the species till not one is left. For if any are left, their great ratio of reproduction, four to five broods of five eggs each, each year, would soon render the work useless and leave the people more discouraged than now. The repression of the sparrow cannot be undertaken locally with any lasting or permanent effect, for the killing of a few thousands is as a drop in the bucket, and the small vacuum would soon be filled by others swarming in from neighboring parts.

The letters I have received show that some here, some there, are doing honest work toward sparrow extermination, and while I do not want in the least to discourage them in their efforts, the results are only temporary and the work must be kept up contin-

ually. If one State or a group of States set to work carefully within their borders, some lasting results will be obtained and the continuous work need only be kept up on the borders of the territory where the sparrow has been exterminated. But a far better way is to have the whole country do this extermination, now, at once, and all over the United States.

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### QUESTIONS.

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On April 12th I observed a song sparrow flying jerkedly across the road, singing at the same time. Is not this an unusual occurrence?

Yours,

Howard Wheeler McMillen.

No! Not unusual early in the spring. Have observed the trait with other birds who do not do it habitually as the Horned Larks do. [Ed.]

---

The male bird was of a dusky black with the Primaries white. He will fly up in the air and give a series of notes similar to that of the Eastern Bobolink and then drops to the ground again. The female is more of a brown in color. Is this not the W. Bobolink?

I am sure that their eggs are blue, and greatly resemble the Bluebirds, as I have scared them off the nest time after times.

Please let me know as to this matter and oblige.

Yours truly,

Lake Harris.

No! This is not the Bobolink. The bird and eggs described are the Lark Bunting.

By the way, there is no Western sub species of Bobolink now. [Ed.]

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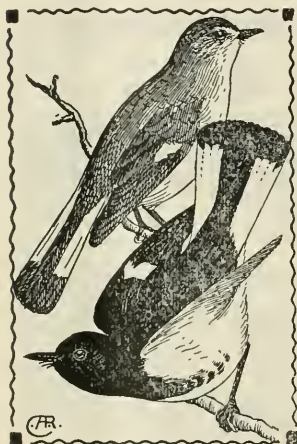
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VOL. XXIV. No. 8.

ALBION, N. Y., AUG., 1907.

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DR. M. T. CLECKLEY,

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Dear Mr. Short:—

In glancing through my Oologist, I notice in regard to the English Sparrow, it is reported as absent in Oklahoma; but it is a great mistake, as the English Sparrow is our most common bird and to my belief is the cause of the scarcity of song birds. I have know of times innumerable when the Sparrow has driven birds away even after they have laid their eggs. My opinion is that the Sparrow should be exterminated at all costs and make room for the song birds.

U. B. W.,

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 8.

ALBION, N. Y. AUG., 1907.

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## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.  
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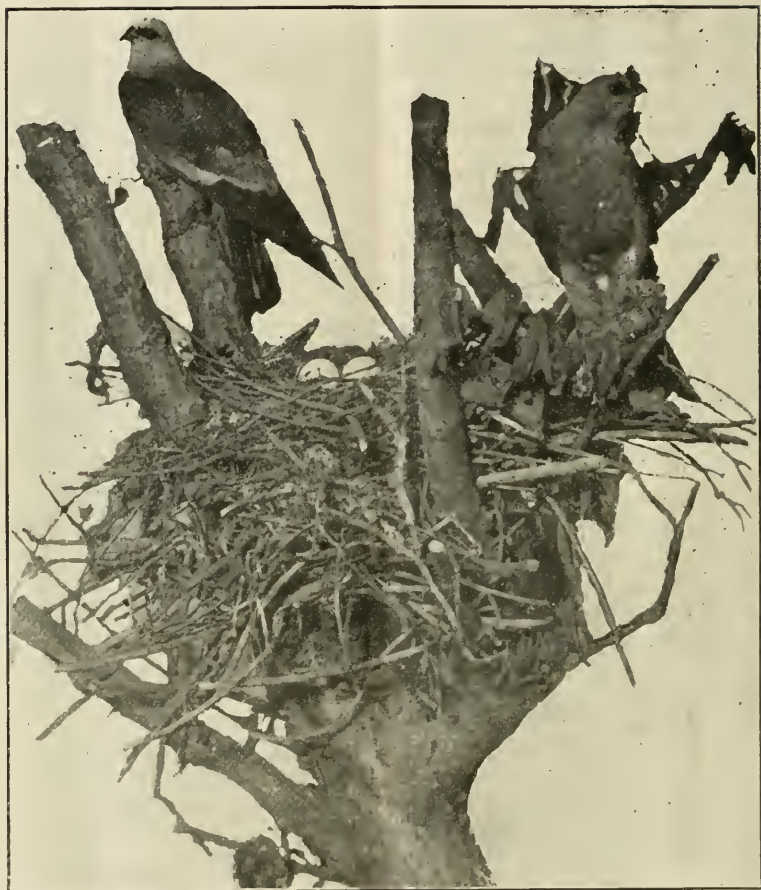
### A SET OF KITE'S EGGS.

While taking an after-supper stroll,  
near Baldwin, Kansas., on the even-  
ing of May 22, 1906, I thought that I  
saw a hawk leave a clump of elm  
trees. At first I was doubtful whether

it was some species of kite or a night  
hawk or some of its kin. However, I  
went under the trees and looking up  
I saw a small bunch of sticks in one  
of the high forks. But as there was  
a memory of a crow's nest, in the dim  
past, somewhere in the group of trees,  
I placed little weight on the find. A  
few days later I climbed to the nest,  
noting beforehand, that there were  
bent-down twigs to speak of some for-  
mer climber. To my joy I found a  
shallow cupped nest, smaller than  
that of the crow, and lined with the  
pinnate leaves of *Amorpha fruticosa*,  
or shrub Indigo. The shallow cup of  
the nest was all out of harmony with  
the mass of sticks which formed the  
body of the nest, the bottom of the  
depression being less than an inch  
deep.

June 7, I again visited the nesting  
site and as I approached, I could see  
the black wings and tail feathers pro-  
jecting over the edge of the nest.  
Now, I was sure of my find; and with  
the enthusiasm born of the collector,  
I threw a stick up in the tree to scare  
her off. The graceful flight of the  
beautiful bird but added to the vim  
with which I was preparing to climb.  
Then up I went. There, in the shal-  
low faded green cup lay one white  
egg. It was a feast to the eyes; and  
I picked it up and carefully examined  
it; then placed it back in the nest.

After assuring myself that my hopes  
were not a dream, I determined to  
make these Kites immortal by secur-  
ing not only the eggs, but also the  
nest and birds. So I had Prof. Elmer  
Monahan, taxidermist of Baker Uni-  
versity, go with me to secure the birds.



Miss. Kite—Birds, Nest and Eggs.

Photo by Bridwell.

I shall give the account just as I recorded it in my diary the day after the event.

July 12, 1906.—Yesterday morning I went after my Mississippi Kite's nest. Elmer Monahan took his gun and a rope. I had Prof. Parmenter's gun, a saw and a lot of string. Leaving our things back a ways from the tree, I sent Elmer out east where he could get a shot when the female bird flew off; as she had done, when I scared her before. Then I went around to the west. I was half afraid that some one had headed me off and had gotten the eggs, but when I came around from behind the hedge tree that shuts off the view of the nest from the south, I was assured by the sight of the tail sticking back over the edge of the nest. Then when I came full-under the nest she flew out to the east, just right for Elmer to get a shot. He missed the first time; and shot again. Looking through the leaves, I had seen her go toward the east and thought he had missed the second time; and then, when I saw a bird soaring up above the tree tops, I got ready to shoot and was just on the point of pulling the trigger when Elmer shot and brought it down. It proved to be the male bird; and while he went in search of the female, I caught it. After he found the female, he came over to the place where I had captured the male. It was winged and was in fighting mood. When Elmer reached for it, it made a grab for his hand and sank its claws deep into one of his fingers. We had a hard time getting it loose. After he had tied the legs of his captives and fastened them to some dogwood bushes, we went after the eggs and nest.

"I climbed up eagerly, and when I had ascended, I found that the second egg had been laid. It was a pretty sight, the two white eggs lying in their bed of *Amorpha* leaves. It repaid me for

my climb of sixty feet. The nest was built of sticks, some of them a bit larger than a lead pencil, and a few pieces of corn shucks, an occasional bark fibre, and here and there a downy feather and lined with green *Amorpha fruticosa* leaves. In size it was very small, being about half as large as a crow's; and there was hardly a sign of a cup to it, more like a saucer.

I took the eggs out and putting them in my hat, started down. Elmer offered to meet me; but I told him I'd bring them down. "If you'd break them, I'd never forgive you," I said, "and if I break them there will be no one else to blame." With the eggs in the crown of my hat and my hat firmly set on the top of my head, I climbed down. Each time the eggs rubbed together or came in contact in my hat, a semi-shiver ran down my back for fear that they might be broken. At last, my treasures safely lying on some cotton, again I "shinned" up the tree.

Taking from my pocket some string and the long wooden needle, I had brought for that purpose, I began to sew up the nest. Weaving the cord in and out, sewing the green-leaf lining securely in and wrapping the nest about and through and in and out with about twenty thrusts of my needle, which I had whittled out before we started, I soon had it done. Then I let down a large cord to which Elmer fastened the saw. Hanging the saw to a limb, I sent the rope down again and brought up the hundred-foot rope Elmer had brought. Next I sawed off the limbs quite a distance above the nest. Then tying the rope about the big limb on which the nest rested, and arranging the rope over a limb so that Elmer could keep it from breaking off and falling too hard, I sawed away. The limb on which I was standing was the one on which the nest reposed. If it should just bend over and

hang by the bark, there was danger of it swinging clear back to me and knocking me off; so I sawed very carefully until it began to go down gently. Although the limb broke off clean, and the nest hung top side down, hardly a leaflet or twig of the lining was disturbed. Slowly we let it down.

At last it was safely landed. Descending exultingly and hastily loading ourselves with our plunder, we started home. Elmer took the lead with the two guns, the rope, the saw, and the game sack in which were the two birds. I followed with the two eggs in one hand, the big limb over my shoulder, holding it with the other hand. Thus we come home triumphantly.

The group is now mounted and in the Baker University museum, Prof. Monahan having done a very fine piece of work in preparing them. The photographs which I took of the nest with the mounted birds, and eggs, give some idea of the appearance.

ARTHUR BRIDWELL,  
Baldwin, Kan.

---

#### Nesting of Bicknell's Thrush.

---

Knowing that Bicknell's Thrush (*Hylocichla aliciae bicknelli*) breeds on a few small islands off the southwestern end of Nova Scotia, I sent Mr. H. F. Tufts to collect a few sets. He was fortunate enough to find three sets. The first was taken June 13, 1907, with three fresh eggs with the parent bird in a thick top of a large spruce, 25 feet from the ground. The nest was made of dead grasses, bits of decayed wood, twigs and moss and was lined with fine dead grass. Set No. 2 was taken on the same day (June 13). The nest was placed in a small Fir about 15 feet from the ground and close to the trunk. It was composed of dead grasses, moss and

small twigs and lined with fine dead grasses. The third set was taken June 14. The eggs were fresh. The nest was situated in the top of a dead Fir sapling, among mossy twigs. It was made of decayed wood bits, grasses and moss, and was lined with fine dried grass. Three eggs seem to be a full set.

In his letter to me, Mr. Tufts says: "I reached Mud Island on June 7, where I found almost no thrushes, so the next day I went to Seal Island. Here on the 10th, I found two nests of Bicknell's Thrush, each with one egg, which I took on the 13th with three eggs each, which seems to be the full complement.

"On the 11th I discovered another nest with one egg which I took on the 14th with three eggs. I also discovered two more nests building and one completed, none of which contained eggs. However, it was necessary for me to leave the island, having already over-stepped my time limit by two days and having incurred the extra expense of a useless return trip of the man, hired to come for me from mainland. No regular boat goes to the islands after June 1, when the lobster season closes.

"Mr. Crowell and family, who own the island, with whom every visitor must stay and from whom permission to collect anything must be had, are ardent bird lovers and protectors, being members of the Audubon Society; and it was only with considerable urging on my part that I was granted liberty to collect a few sets. According to Mr. Crowell the Thrushes are decreasing in numbers, and especially during the past two or three years; so he is making every effort to discourage the killing of the birds or the taking of their eggs."

"The nest is the most difficult to find of any small bird occurring in equal numbers on a given area. The



Nest and Eggs of Say's Phoebe in Situ.  
Photo by Rockwell, Denver.

nesting birds are extremely shy and suspicious—this is my experience during the two trips to the Island.”

JOHN E. THAYER.

---

### Anent the Swamp Sparrow.

The recent article of Mr. Millers' concerning this bird greatly appealed to me and it affords me pleasure to be able to throw a little light upon large sets of this bird.

Upon the Delaware meadows, to the south of Philadelphia, this species is the most abundant bird and nests in incredible numbers during the months of May, June and July, May 30th being the height of the season. This locality is one of great interest to me and it is here that among the tussocks of swamp grass I have found numerous nests.

The usual number of eggs is four, less commonly three and five. The July nests make up the record of sets of three, however.

It was in this region that on the ninth of June, 1907, in company with Mr. J. Harris Reed, I had the good fortune to take what I have every reason to believe is the largest set of eggs ever recorded; namely, one of eight. All the circumstances seem to point to these being laid by one bird. The nest was the largest one I have ever seen and the eggs barely covered the base of the cavity—were not laid in layers. Six of the eggs were colored alike, while the other two are much less heavily marked. This set was viewed in situ by Mr. Reed and he mentioned at the time that in his extended acquaintance with the nesting habits of this bird, it was the first set he had seen larger than five.

A fact that deserves attention which it has not received, is the great proportion of empty nests and after giving the subject considerable thought

I am about convinced that the birds frequently build sham nests like the Marsh Wren. My statistics from this locality, (based upon the observations of several competent Ornithologists), seem to show that only one nest is occupied out of every two or three discovered. I do not maintain that such is always the case, but hope to give more light on the subject at a later date.

RICHARD C. HARLOW.

---

### A Paradise of Warblers.

One must admit that a locality where Mourning Warblers take the place of Maryland Yellow-throats, and where the Canadian Warbler is even more common than the Redstart, is, in New York state, unusual. Yet this is precisely how we found them during the season of July, 1907, near Woodworth's Lake, Fulton county, N. Y.

We were encamped on the above mentioned lake from July 8, until July 20, 1907. Even while walking to our destination, on the first day, we noted no less than eight species of warblers, and before the two weeks while we stayed at the lake had elapsed, six more were added to our lists. Mourning Warblers, (*Geothlypis philadelphia*), were actually abundant; adults were often observed with grubs in their bills indicating the presence of young, and on July 13, a young bird of this species was captured and examined. No nests were found, however. Canadian Warbler, (*Wilsonia canadensis*), were even more abundant than the Mourning Warbler. One had a nest directly in back of our tent and often attracted our attention by its sharp alarm notes. A pair of Black and White Warblers were observed on the south bank of the lake on July 14. Magnolia, (*Dendroica maculosa*), and the Myrtle, (*Dendroica coronata*) were often observed among the low spruce

clearings. A nest of the Chestnut-sided Warbler, (*Dendroica pennsylvanica*), containing 3 fresh eggs, was found on July 16. The nest was three feet up in a low shrub. The clutch must have been a second one, judging by the late date. Black-throated Green Warblers, (*Dendroica virens*), and the Black-throated Blue Warbler, (*Dendroica coerulescens*), were rather rare but were both observed on July 8, and at various intervals thereafter. A solitary male Blackburnian Warbler, (*Dendroica blackburniae*), was observed on July 8. The Yellow Warbler, (*Dendroica aestiva*), was only noted on one occasion, July 18. The American Redstart, (*Setophaga ruticilla*), the Northern Yellow-throat, (*Geothlypis trichas brachydactyla*), and the Oven-bird, (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) were common here as elsewhere. A single specimen of the Nashville Warbler, (*Helminthophila rubricapilla*) was observed along the lumber road leading to the lake on July 13. The 'Pea-body' song of the White-throated Sparrow, (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), aroused us every morning before the sun arose, while the glorious refrain of the Solitary Hermit Thrush, (*Hylocichla guttata pallasii*), floated over the lake until far into the night. A few other birds may be mentioned:

A family of Slate-colored Juncos, (*Junco hyemalis*), was noted on July 15. A few Red-breasted Nuthatches, (*Sitta canadensis*), were observed around our tent during the last week of our stay. A single Red-headed Woodpecker, (*Melaerpes erythrocephalus*), was observed below the lake on the first day of our stay.

The American Goshawk, (*Accipiter atricapillus*), was the commonest of the four hawks occurring about the lake. Forty-three additional birds were observed during our stay. The total list, enumerating sixty-three species, is reasonably large for any lo-

cality, considering the season of the year and the short time of our observance.

HARRY WHITE.  
CHAS. P. ALEXANDER.

---

### The English Starling.

(*Sturnus Vulgarus*.)

The English Starling (*Sturnus Vulgarus*), which was introduced into this country in 1890 is, in this locality, and let us hope in many others, a most beautiful bird.

In the first place it consumes a great many insects, and in the second place it is rapidly driving out the destructive English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

About three years ago I noticed the first two pairs of Starlings I had ever seen, around one of the numerous bird boxes on this place. Of course the Sparrows objected greatly but, to my great delight, the Starlings were most always victorious. In this box they reared their first broods. They stayed there all winter and, in the following spring, there were several more pairs around. These also bred in numerous boxes, driving the Sparrows out in all directions, and now there are very few Sparrow survivors, and what few Sparrows there are left are vanishing slowly but surely. Would it not be a good act to distribute some of these birds among the states in which the Sparrows are preying upon the Swallow's young, as mentioned in the June "Oologist?"

There is a marked difference in the increase of the song birds about the dwellings since the Sparrows have been driven out. On this place of 35 acres, there were about 10 nests of various kinds of song birds. This makes an average of about three nests per acre.

Let us now turn to the nidification of the Starling.

About the last week in April they

select a site for their nest. The site picked out is in some bird box or crevice about some building, but in my experience it is most often a cavity in a tree that is chosen. In this they build a nest of grass, straw, sticks, etc. I have never found a nest lined with any soft material. They lay from four to six beautiful pale blue eggs; usually four or five, but on May 6, last, I found a set of 7 eggs in a cavity in an old apple tree 15 feet from the ground. One of the seven eggs which I mention, which were two-thirds advanced in incubation, was cracked entirely around, but when blown the chick was found to be very much alive.

The young are of a slaty color, with a white spot on the throat. They leave the nest between two and three weeks old. Two broods are generally reared in a season.

Should not the Starling be encouraged to the greatest extent possible?

I should like to hear from other observers on the subject of the Starling driving out the Sparrows.

P. G. HOWES.

Stamford, Conn.

Mr. Ernest H. Short, Chili, N. Y.

Dear Sir:—Having sent a set of eggs to you for identification last year, which you identified as Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus Bairdii*), I thought it might be of interest to you to know that although previous to my finding that set of eggs there was no record authentic or otherwise of the occurrence of the bird in the state of Kansas. I have this year collected two skins of this bird, and found a nest of the same containing one downy young bird, thus proving beyond a doubt by two consecutive year's records that it IS a regular breeder in Kansas.

I write this to express my gratitude to you for your kindness in aid-

ing me to establish this record.

I would indeed be grateful to you, if you should see fit to have, you should call attention to this record in the "Oologist."

Thanking you for past favors and for your help, I remain,

Fraternally,

LOGAN EVANS,

Wilsey, Kan.

---

Editor of The Oologist:—

In regard to the question, "Can birds distinguish their eggs and young from those of others?" I write as follows: On June 17th, I found a nest of Carolina Wren with four fresh eggs in it. Having found a Catbird's nest near by containing three eggs, I removed the latter and placed them in the nest of the former. The mother bird returning to her nest did not notice the exchange, but quietly resumed her task of incubating the eggs. Two weeks later I visited the nest to find that it contained three young Catbirds. Both birds seemed to be very attentive to the wants of their young for about two days, when a cat discovered the nest and robbed it of its occupants.

I find that Wrens, Catbirds, Wood Thrushes, Cardinals, and Sparrows, such as Chipping, Song and English, can be easily fooled with marbles or smooth rocks substituted for their eggs. I find that most of them, where there is an incomplete set, will complete it if rocks or marbles are substituted for the eggs taken, while some will remove them and complete the set.

Will you please let me know whether a set of six of the English Sparrow is uncommon? Hoping that you may make some use of the above.

I remain yours truly,

D. H. BURGESS,

Petersburg, Va.

Ans.—No! Sets of six English Sparrow are common in my experience.—ED.

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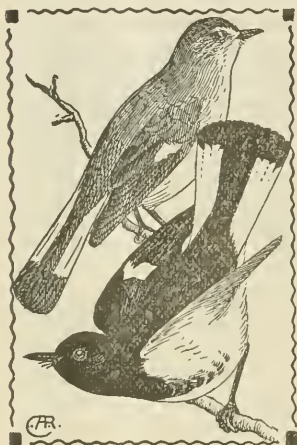
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VOL. XXIV. No. 9.

ALBION, N. Y., SEP., 1907.

WHOLE NO. 242

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Chili, N. Y.

# THE OÖLOGIST.

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ALBION, N. Y. SEP., 1907.

WHOLE No. 242

## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OÖLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-  
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

Correspondence and items of interest to the student of Birds, their Neats and Eggs, solicited from all.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,  
Chili, Monroe Co., N. Y.

### A Decoration Day Trip.

At daylight on the morning of May 30th I embarked in an old flat boat for a trip down the river to my old collecting and ducking grounds. The boat was a leaky old thing but there was a fairly good stage of water and

I concluded that riding would beat walking.

There was a very heavy fog which did not lift for some time. The trip was only fairly begun when on a gravel bar that loomed up ahead suddenly cut of the fog I saw a peculiar looking wader. I failed to recognize it, so lost no time but cut loose at once and landing I found I had a fine adult Turnstone. My first, and no doubt, last record. At Erie 65 miles from us many shore birds are taken and I have many good things in my collection that I got there on the "Peninsula" but I never met the Turnstone although I have one that was taken there in Sept., 1904. There are but few fall records and only 1 spring record. So this one specimen well repaid me for the trip. Farther down I saw a belated fm. Lesser Scaup. By the time I arrived at my destination the fog was lifting and the sun shining brightly. I first explored an island. On a sand bar at the foot were about 50 soft shelled turtles of all sizes. When I got in sight there was a grand rush for the water. The Rough-winged swallows were nesting. An Osprey was plunging for fish, but didn't seem to have any success. A Bittern arose and left in a hurry. There seemed to be nothing that I wanted so I landed on the mainland. There is a big flat at this point through which a deep sluggish boyou flows; the timber is elm and sycamore mostly and the undergrowth is large thorn-bushes. The ground is carpeted with a dense growth of ferns, nettles, skunk cabbage, etc. I

found large numbers of migrants, mostly Warblers. Mourning Warblers were almost abundant. 2 or 3 were always in sight. I noticed among others several late Myrtles, an occasional Wilsons, and a number of Bay-breasted. On this flat I saw a number of small flycatchers mostly Leasts. I saw 7 or 8 Yellow-bellied and took 3 fine highly plumaged ones. Also shot a nice fm. Tennessee warbler. The only one I have noticed this spring. I watched sharp for the Cape May as often one can be picked up at this place but I did not see any. Along the bayou I sneaked up within 30 feet of an old Blue heron and watched him fishing awhile.

On the next flat which is much higher. The timber is mixed chestnut, beech, pine, hemlock, etc. At one place is a heavy hemlock swamp. Here I found numbers of Blackburnian Magnolia and Black-th green warblers. I looked awhile for nests but was too early. (I got among them later on) and all of interest I saw among the thick hemlock was a huge old Porcupine and a Barred Owl. On this flat I saw plenty of Thrushes (mostly Olive-backed.) Also several pairs of Red-sh. Hawks and during the morning I found 2 nests of young nearly large enough to fly. A Pileated woodpecker got quite noisy but kept well away. They, no doubt, nest somewhere in the mountains back of the flats as there is miles of wild uninhabited land. I saw a great many red and several black squirrels also several young woodchucks prowling about. Black-th. blue warblers were plentiful in the more open timber also a few Hoodeds. Solitary Vireos were unusually plenty. Altogether I saw 23 species of warblers and 82 species of birds. The migrants were later this spring than ever before. I saw Myrtle, Bay-breasted and Wilsons as late as June 6th.

R. B. Simpson.

Warren Co., Pa.

## RECESS-TIME.

"Sometimes," the old physician growled, looking after a departing patient, "sometimes I think I'm beginning at the wrong end—that I'd better give up doctoring minds and bodies,' and doctor school programs. Do you know what I'd do first of all? Insist upon every boy's having a hobby—root round till I'd found something he had an affinity for, and set him at it. You saw that man? Overworked lawyer—brain-fag. Prescribed six months' vacation. Do you know what will happen? He'll go off somewhere and mope round, bored to death for a week or two, and then go back to his office, and death—or worse; and it all might have been saved if he'd ever had time to acquire a hobby."

The case was unfortunately not at all an uncommon one, yet the remedy would have been easy—if only it had been taken in time. In this age of brain and eye-strain a sensible hobby is one of the best investments a young man can make. Women are more fortunate in this respect, since there are scores of prettily hand occupations which they "take to" naturally; but the tendency of the average business man is to grow more and more absorbed in his business as the years pass, until, when the clock strikes for recess, he has forgotten how to go out and play.

Suppose, upon the contrary, he had made a hobby of geology, botany or entomology,—had joined a mountain-climbing club or invested in a camera—he would have had exhaustless interest with which to fill his enforced idleness—if indeed the vacation had been necessary at all.

A hobby, the dictionary declares, is any favorite plan or object which a person pursues with zeal and delight. Rightly used, it often proves

to be not only the means of genuine pleasure, but health to mind and body, and an open door to the spirit. —Youth's Companion.

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Extracts from My Note Book.

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April 13, 1907, Saw a partially albino Robin. It was a male in full plumage but had white primaries in each wing.

July 14, 1907, Saw a partially albino Robin. The neck and breast were flecked with white, the primaries were pure white, the secondaries were edged with white and the back was streaked with white. In the tail next to the outer feathers were two white ones.

April, 1, 1907. Watched a Wood Pewee bathing for about 5 minutes. It would light on a weed stalk a few feet from the water's edge, fly to the water, hover over it just touching its breast to the surface and then fly back to its perch, preen its feathers and repeat this performance 4 or 5 times.

Apr. 20, 1907. Saw a Flicker wooing his mate. Such bowing and scraping, such a display of plumage and such notes I had never heard of before.

Apr. 21. Saw a couple of Turkey Buzzards flying low over the woods at Rossford. 4 or 5 Crows were flying about them and finally one of the Crows attacked one of the Buzzards always keeping above it and then dropping down on its back. The Buzzard tried to dodge but was unsuccessful and finally got away by rising so high that the Crows either dared not or could not follow.

Mar. 22. Observed a Blue Jay tearing open cocoons and eating the contents.

Apr. 21. Nest of a Bluebird in a deserted Woodpecker's hole 20 feet

from the ground. Saw an English Sparrow go into the nest, come out, wipe his bill on a branch and then return to the nest. All the while the pair of Bluebirds were hovering about uttering cries of distress, but not daring to attack the intruder.

April 1, 1907. Saw two Passenger Pigeons. No specimens taken but identified by the glass.

May 22, 1907. Saw a Cory Least Bittern which was taken by Mr. Wm. P. Holton May 25.

A. C. Reed.

Toledo, O.

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The Quail Trap, June 7.—Northern birds "en tour" in southern Connecticut returned at the usual time to their summer homes, in spite of the long lingering winter weather. Pine grosbeaks in changing plumage went first, followed by tree sparrows, who outnumbered all the other winter visitors. Snow birds were the last to go, many thousand juncos from points further south going through here as late as April 21. Bluejays were never so common before in the cold months and not a family in the neighborhood but had a dozen or more showy jays at the daily backdoor "handout."

The covey of seven quail on our farm were seen by several people in February and March. We saw their tracks in the late snows many times, and June 1 the males began calling near the bungalow. A bunch of 9 quail wintered at Fairview reservoir, and Mr. Al. Lillibridge heard these bobwhites whistle for the first time on the first day of June. Mr. L. E. Rawson saw four females at once in our woods last week, headed by old Red Ruff himself, puffed up in angry expostulation. In the spring Red Ruff often disdains fight at a mere human, and on this interruption with his monstrous black collar stiffly

erect, he stalked away after his flying harem as independent and fearless as a barnyard chanticleer. We have seen pheasants again in Thompson's woods. Woodcock returned March 1 in fewer numbers than usual, and Wilson's snipe tarry but a day or two in our meadows.

All the black-coated gentry—grackles, cowbirds and redwings—with phœbes, robins, sparrows and bluebirds were here March 15; but it was a long and lonesome month and a half before the regular summer residents appeared. During the fierce snowstorm of April 15 I was afield looking up these early arrivals sheltered in queer nooks and corners. Thrashers and barn swallows did not come till May-day. For many years orioles have come back May 6 and 7—never later than the 8th; but on this backward season orioles, bobolinks, tanagers, grosbeaks and republican (Cliff) swallows were ten days late, in both counties. Hummers and whip-poor-wills alone were on time. As usual cuckoos and nighthawks were the last to arrive. The stake-drivers and marsh-hawks have not put in an appearance in the meadow this year. The unerring barndoor record from Selectman Lillibridge has not yet come to hand for comparisons with "Quaal Trap dates."

Mr. Lillibridge picked up two tanagers killed by the extreme cold, and I found and restored a chilled tanager in the odd yearling half-dress. A second visit to an incomplete clutch of ruffed grouse showed that it had been raided by foxes who had a burrow near the nest. The robin that has bred for three years in the punky hollow of our old ash tree had three eggs April 20, but the next morning a female sharp-shin took off her head; but the accipiter got entangled in wire fencing and was in turn decapitated.

A partridge with tiny chicks came charging at my feet with dragging wings and drove me out of the woods.

Crows took the eggs from the Boggy Meadow marsh harrier the third week in May, and I have noted crows eggng many times during the past two weeks. At 4 a. m., before farmers are out of doors, crows rob all the robins' nests they can find around the houses and orchards. Under semi-protection there are still eight unharried robins' nests with eggs and young on the Lillibridge place, but the crows have left but three nests untouched at our cottage. These thieving corbies on June 5th dug out two full sets of bay-winged bunting, vesper sparrow; which I had been trying to protect near the bungalow.

There were a dozen Humming birds on a cold May morning with the mercury at 35 frolicking and mating on a patch of flowering currant in a neighbor's yard. For an hour I watched the vivid males and three females woo, fight and feed. It was an unusual sight to see six or seven ruby throats at one time perched among the yellow bloom and when the whole bunch were a-wing pursuing each other in anger and play it was a maze of whirring wings, expanded tails and amatory flashing of gilded backs and blazing gorgets. In the decrease of useful birds it is good to note the general increase of bobolinks. The farmers' name of "skunk blackbird," obtains here; but not so well known is the southern darkey's sobriquet of "wild mares"—so called from the supposed resemblance in the note to the whinnying of a horse.

Mr. Richards has taken several sets of buteos eggs in the town of Norwich this season, and with great nerve he went a second time to the tree from which he had a frightful fall and secured the set of barred

owls' eggs. As late as June 6 I climbed to a perfectly fresh set of red-shouldered hawk in our woods. To further emphasize the unusual lateness of the season I may add that purple cypripedium had not opened here June 5, yellow whippoorwills' shoes were not budded, and white hawthorne only just coming into bloom. But the painted ladies in the west meadow were boldly flaunting their freshly applied rouge.

I found a set of Bartram's plover at Lanman's chair when a small lad. I can remember surprising a gang of little boys blowing with pins a set of fourteen sora rails' eggs which they had taken from the summer reeds of Rockwell's skating pond, while looking for redwings' nests. Good climbing boys used to shin up the tall evergreens on the Slater property and bring down hats full of grackles' eggs, excusing the theft on the round that "crow blackbirds sucked robins' eggs!"

In some old collection in town are still shown faded end-blown eggs of crested flycatcher, nuthatch, wood pewee and titmouse from the Acaademy lot, oven bird from General Ely's place, whippoorwill from Senator Foster's orchard, oriole from Bliss place, quail, grouse, woodcock and mourning dove from the present golf links, chats, Maryland yellowthroats larks, bobolinks, prairie and chestnut-sided warbler, and white-eyed vireos from the Cobb lot, with rubythroats, rose-breasts, cuckoos, redstarts, warbling and yellow-throated greenlets from Backus hospital and adjoining estates.

Every boy was a self styled oologist in those olden days—"ool. ornitholetcoll"—but in these days of school bird-talks and Arbor day bird walks, egg-collectors are few and far between. Let no timber be cut, and all

brush be allowed to grow, and with proper protection in our new park, Rockwell's woods will continue to be as of old the special haunts and favorite breeding grounds for the big raptors and every kind of song and insectivorous bird found in southern New England.

C. L. Rawson.

Norwich, Conn. "Bulletin."

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### Something to Think About.

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Friend Short:—

Having read Mr. Peabody's letter re. Gt Blue Heron I immediately got busy and measured my series. I have six sets,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Maine; 2-4, 1-5, California; and  $\frac{1}{4}$ , 1-5 Colorado. 26 eggs in all, and all "northern" taken. Careful measurement gives the following figures:

Longest eggs: 2.67x1.69, Maine  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; 2.66x1.76,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Calif.

Shortest eggs: 2.37x1.84, 2.40x1.77,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Colorado.

Broadest eggs: 1.85x2.55,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Calif.; 1.85x2.48,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Colo.

Narrowest eggs: 1.64x2.60, 1.69x2.67,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Maine.

Longest average sets: 2.60 Maine. Shortest average set: 2.41, Calif. Broadest average set: 1.82, Colorado. Narrowest average set, 1.70, Maine. Average of six sets, 2.50x1.78.

The average length of the six sets approaches the figures of Mr. Oliver Davie, who says "average size 2.50x1.50," but I've never seen an egg of *Ardea herodias* as narrow as 1.50 inches.

In all that has appeared so far there has been no attempt at explanation of the difference in size between Northern and Southern birds and eggs, and the writer would like to air some of his ideas on the subject.

In the cases of the Bald Eagle, Redwing Blackbird and Crows, we find

that the Northern birds are much larger, lay larger eggs, and the sets contain more eggs. This is especially true of the Redwings which lay four eggs almost invariably in the north and occasionally five. In the extreme south the Redwing is content to lay two or three eggs which are smaller. Now for the Great Blue Heron:

Northern sets of *Ardea herodias* have more and smaller eggs, southern sets fewer and larger eggs, but the southern birds can be accused of laying two sets a year, while the best the northern birds can do is to raise one brood a year. The birds mentioned in the preceding paragraph are nearctic in their affinities, and therefore flourish best in a northern climate, where their environments are better adapted to them. But the herons are neotropical and as soon as they go north they deteriorate. However in order to maintain themselves in a less favorable environment, they must lay more eggs, which are smaller and are liable on that account to produce less hardy young.

The southern heron lays fewer and larger eggs, producing hardier young which have a greater chance of existing. The southern Redwings produce fewer young in a less favorable environment, but are able to reproduce more than once, which explains the small southern sets of the Redwing. In the north one slightly larger brood is as advantageous as two smaller broods in the south, for a nearctic bird, while a neotropical bird must produce one larger brood in the north because environment is not so favorable and time for reproduction is much more limited.

Very truly yours,

Chas. S. Thompson.

Possibly true. It's worthy of investigation anyway. A hasty examination of my large series of Crows'

Eggs confirms Mr. Thompson's statements regarding them. Evidently the decrease in size of birds militates against the smaller size of sets and prevents increase in size of eggs in the small Southern sets of Crow.—[Ed.]

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**"On the Haunts of the Swainson's Warbler."**

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M. T. Cleckley, M. D.,

Augusta, Ga., 1907, 35c.

Pressure of other matters has delayed a review of this interesting pamphlet some weeks. In a neatly printed pamphlet of 9 pages and covers Dr. Cleckley reviews his experiences with this bird since he first discovered it as a local breeder on May 30, 1903, describing the habits. Song and Food and noting the acquisition during five seasons of about twenty sets aggregating 73 eggs. There are three plates of nests and eggs in situ and one plate of eggs. The second plate is very good as to detail. He did not succeed in photographing Madame Swainsoni at home.

The nature of their habitat would make this difficult of course. Evidently this bird must be more plentiful in the almost impenetrable swamps of this region than recorded.

He does not record any sets over 3 eggs. Apparently 3 is normal for Swainsoni as probably for *bachmani*.

Ernest H. Short.

Editor Oologist:—

While sets of five eggs of the American Robin are being recorded I take the liberty of adding my experience. I have a record of every robin's nest found by me during the last twenty-one years and no nest of young held more than four and but one nest of eggs contained five. This was secured May 30, 1899, and is in my collection. The eggs are a trifle less than the average size and of the long narrow type but being uniform in size

shape and color shade, they were all undoubtedly laid by the same bird. How about large sets of other members of the family? I never personally found more than four eggs in nests of the Wilson's and Wood Thrush but have examined, in the field, one set each of five; the former discovered by my brother, Walter C. Wood, May 31, 1896 and the latter by Mr. Breadshaw Swales, May 30, 1900. The above mentioned three sets of five are the only local records.

J. Claire Wood.

Detroit, Mich.

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### Another Large Set of the American Robin (*Merula migratoria*, L.

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During the past few months, several very interesting articles have appeared in the "Oologist" in regard to unusually large sets of the American Robin.

On May 5th, 1907, we found a set of robin's eggs which were very interesting not only on account of their unusual number but because of their exceptionally large size.

The next nest was situated in a shed, placed on a beam about 18 feet up. The nest was of ordinary size and composition but the eggs, five in number struck us at once as being unusually large; these offer the following dimensions: (1) 1.22x.82 in.; (2) 1.23x.81 in.; (3) 1.17x.78 in.; (4) 1.21x.82 in.; (5) 1.22x.81 in.

It may be possible that our robin's lay unusually small eggs and that the above measurements are very ordinary, but out of a great number of sets of this bird which we have examined, this particular set averages the largest in both length and breadth.

We have but one other record of the robin laying more than four eggs; a nest containing five young birds was

found by Mr. Alan Wright during June, 1904.

Chas. P. Alexander.

Harry W. Clute.

We are in receipt of a reprint from July "Auk" on "Autumn Warbler Migration" by friend J. C. Wood of Detroit, that is replete in interesting observations and facts.

It reflects great credit on its author as a careful and persevering investigator and we hope to give our readers at least a part of it soon.

Editor.

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Editor Oologist:—

Several months ago I wrote you of a set of five eggs of the American Robin taken by me in 1906. I have had the good fortune to collect another set of five this year. On May 22nd while riding in the country I noticed a robin's nest by the roadside, 3½ feet up, in a crotch of a small walnut tree. The nest was composed of the usual materials and contained five fresh eggs. They measure 1.09x.81, 1.05x.82, 1.03x.79, 1.06x.80, 1.10x.82. This is the second set of five eggs of this species that I have ever seen. I also wish to report the breeding in this locality of the mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*.) I took a set of four eggs, incubation ½ from a nest in a hedge fence along a road on May 21st of this year. This set was taken about 5 miles east of Circleville. Another nest containing four young was seen about 8 miles west of here. This bird after raising her first brood, built again and reared a brood of three. Circleville, which lies in about the centre of Ohio is, I think, rather far north for these birds to breed. I took a set of three of Black Rail this year, but I will report this find in a later letter.

Respectfully Yours,

B. R. Bales,

Editor "Oologist."

Dear Sir:—Let me tell you my experience with the Black and White Warbler for the first time in my life.

On the 30th day of June, 1907, while my little girl, Hazel Eldridge, and I, were climbing the ledge to go strawberrying, we discovered a little nest with 4 well incubated eggs and one very freshly laid egg about one-half the size of the others, but of the same type. The nest was placed in a damp crevice at the bottom of a ledge 4 feet high, but half way up the larger ledge. We did not touch the nest or eggs until our return from the strawberry field. When we returned we saw the Black and White Warbler sitting on her nest. Had I only a camera to take a photograph of it I would have given a great deal. The nest was by no means a hard one to find, but the eggs cost me three hours of my sleep, having finished blowing them at 1:15 o'clock in the morning. Took a set of 5 nice eggs and the best made nest I ever saw of the Black-billed Cuckoo, one hour later. Both sets went in my cabinet.

EDWARD S. COOMBS.

Comment.—This was unusually late for this bird to be incubating. I have seen them feeding young on June 12th. These adventitious eggs, often of smaller size and usually infertile are quite often found near the nest of incubating birds.—ED.

Mr. E. H. Short,  
Chili, N. Y.,

Dear Sir:

In The March Oologist Mr. Wm. S. Pitcairn says "In my locality there was a marked increase in numbers of the Baltimore Oriole (*icterus galbula*.)" This is just the opposite in locality. They have been growing fewer each year; and last year I only saw 4 all summer, on the other hand the Blue Jay (*byanacitta cristata*)

were more numerous in 1906; one pair breeding in a cherry tree in the garden, they are also more numerous this spring. Some of the migrants such as pine warbler (*Dendroica vigoensis*) and pine siskin (*Spinus pinus*) were very numerous, appearing in flocks of from 5 to 50 about the porch eating berries on the honeysuckle vine. On February 11 I also saw a flock of 6 red polls (*Acanthus linoria*) in a pine tree eating the little buds from the twigs.

Very truly,

P. G. Howes, Stamford, Conn.

Toledo, Apr. 2, 1907.

Mr. Ernest H. Short,

Dear Sir:—

I wish to bring to your notice the observation of the Passenger Pigeon here on Apr. 1, 1907. I watched the two Passenger Pigeons for over half an hour. I was hidden behind some bushes not over 100 feet away and saw them clearly through my field glass. They were larger than mourning doves and longer tails, darker heads and rusty-brown breasts. I also saw several Mourning Doves while watching them and thus they afforded good objects for comparison, and hence I think that I could not have been mistaken.

Yours respectfully,

A. C. Read.

## HAND BLOWERS.

We have had descriptions and samples of 3 hand blowers submitted within 60 days. All differing in minor particulars but based on the old principle of air bulb and pipe and none as good as the old Reed Hand Blower which was not perfect.

Perhaps a universal automatic blower available and perfect under all the contingencies of field work is unattainable at a reasonable price. [Ed.]

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VOL. XXIV. No. 10.

ALBION, N. Y., OCT., 1907.

WHOLE No. 243

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 10.

ALBION, N. Y. OCT., 1907.

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## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OÖLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXIDERMISTRY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

Correspondence and items of interest to the student of Birds, their Nests and Eggs, solicited from all.

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### AUTUMN WARBLER MIGRATION.

Extracts From a Reprint of an Article in the "Auk" for July, '07, by  
Permission of the Author.

BY J. CLAIRE WOOD.

In 'The Auk,' Vol. XXIII, No. 1,

January, 1906, I gave an account of the Warblers noted here in the autumn of 1905. That season I devoted my entire spare time to them from August 20 but this autumn I did not start until September 3; consequently, the following list is inaccurate as to first arrivals but I doubt if anything escaped notice from September 3 to the end of the season. A Mourning (Geothlypis philadelphia) and several Nashville Warblers were seen in 1904 but were absent in 1905, while the Tennessee was absent in the former season and common in the latter. This irregularity in warbler migration was interesting, and I wished to learn what percentage of the species were subject to it and also to establish a better knowledge of the relative abundance and time of departure by a comparison with the present season of 1906. To get the most uniform results I hunted over the same territory, with the exception of one or two days and the comparison was satisfactory until displaced by an abnormal change in temperature. During the night of October 9 the mercury dropped to 33 degrees, and we had a genuine heavy snow storm on the 10th, but the snow melted as it fell. Toward evening the mercury began to drop and reached 25 degrees at 3 a. m. on the 11th where it remained for three hours. This killed all plant life, susceptible to frost, and its blighting influence was noticeable throughout the woods on the 14th; even the live oak leaves were affected, while beeches were a mass of yellow and no longer yielded a food supply to the warblers. With the exception

of Black-throated Blue and Myrtle, all the species seen that day were hurrying south under pressure of unnatural excitement, and had probably undergone considerable hardship, as the ground was covered with half a foot of snow sixty miles north of here and about three inches at half that distance.

The woods where I hunted had been greatly reduced in size since 1905, and I was able to note the course of arrivals in many cases and departure in nearly all. The length of the River Range is about thirty miles and its general course approximately S. 45 degrees E. This woods is situated on the south side and is the last piece of thick timber as you follow down the river, there being only a grove between this point and the Detroit River. It is an interesting fact that while the Warblers came down this water-way two-thirds of the Robins took the reverse course. They mainly came from the east and had probably crossed the Detroit River, but several large flights came from the south. Later, however, my piece of timber was the limit of their eastern movement and they went due south from here to a large piece of thick woods. This was the program in 1905 except from September 20 to October 5 when they went southwest to follow a chain of large woods that extended far southward. The lesser number of warblers came from the northeast and had evidently followed the Detroit River. During September about twenty-five per cent. were apparently not migrating but taking life easy and remaining in the woods. I suppose these were the main night travelers and if so, when do migrating warblers sleep? All seen by me exhibited the characteristic activity of the family. We all know that large numbers travel by night, but who has seen them

asleep during the day? Judging from my own experience with night migration, they sleep from about 11 p. m. to 4 a. m. Of course, I really know nothing positively, and my belief is based only on the fact that the birds were not heard calling between the above mentioned hours, and on the actions of a captive Indigo Bunting (*Cyanospiza cyanea*). The bird was not over a month old when trapped in the summer and soon showed no desire to escape from its cage. It appeared contented, and slept peacefully all night until the advent of the fall migration; even then, there was no change in the day time, but soon after dark it became restless. The performance began with a hopping to and fro on its perch with frequent pauses to partly squat, as if about to spring into the air. At the first call note of a passing migrant it uttered a sharp metallic chirp and flew about the cage, making frantic efforts to escape and, when somewhat exhausted, climbed parrot-like about the cage top trying to force its head between the wires. Toward midnight it quieted down and slept a few hours but became active before daylight. This dominating influence ceased suddenly the latter part of October, and had the bird been released after that period it probably would have perished from loss of that mysterious guidance to the south, but, opposed to this, we find the latest warblers the most eager to accomplish their journey. To my mind the early migration demonstrates an instinctive movement. Nothing would seem more natural than the warblers retreating after experiencing actual contact with cold or lack of food, but the first birds are on their way long before the least intimation of cold and while food is abundant. I have seen several small flocks of juvenile Redstarts migrat-

ing July 4. and this species first reaches the West Indies the second week in August. My personal observation of their movement here extends from July 4 to October 7. What possible physical condition or prescience could maintain so uniform a southward movement over such a long period, and through seasonal changes, and all it implies, as comprehended by a comparison of July with October? Why should they migrate at all? Why has not nature modified these warblers to the condition of Chickadees? Perhaps the Myrtle Warbler is leading and the others following a gradual modification in favor of permanent northern residence. A few Myrtles winter at least as far were probably resident in South America and later all wintered there, and at some distant period may become entirely resident on their present breeding grounds.

My observations of the local movement inclines me to believe that the majority of warblers follow the waterways, probably because the bordering timber is the most suitable and food more abundant. This refers mainly to the earlier birds traveling by easy stages and not handicapped for time. On occasions they do not hesitate to take a northerly course, if the woodlands are more congenial to their tastes, but that they retain a correct sense of the direction is plainly shown when a point is reached where further progress would impair the southward movement. This belief is based on observations in Grosse Pointe Township and vicinity where there are no water-ways bordered by timber. Here, on September 3, I discovered a large company of mixed warblers in Gratiot Twp. and followed them about N. 45 degrees E. across Grosse Pointe Twp. and Village of Grosse Pointe Farms to the shore of Lake St. Clair. From this point all suitable territory lay to

the north but they took the opposite direction. On the same date another flock came due east and reached the south end of a large woods. They worked through it to the northern margin and back to the starting point; thence, across the open country about S. 25 degrees W.

From the first week in September there are always late warblers, that is, birds passing days behind the bulk of their species. As the season advances these naturally increase in numbers as more species become affected. After early September single birds or small companies are met with that have come to realize they are due miles to the south, and I doubt if they are in any way influenced from their purpose by convenient food supply, characteristic social tendency or geographical conditions. I spent many hours with the Black-throated Blue Warblers in October. They were neither uneasy nor migrating and assisted me as decoys. They always had a friendly call note for passing warblers, but with decreasing effect as the month advanced. A warbler, bent on business, does not fly from tree to tree but takes spurts of about 100 yards and, after hastily snatching a morsel or two of food, repeats the operation. One or more Black-throated Blue Warblers reply to the first far away note of an approaching warbler and the bird would be sure to pass through or above the flock, exchanging greetings but seldom stopping. This often afforded me a quick shot but if not, I could sometimes intercept the bird at the woodland margin, as I knew the point where it would leave, and all such warblers remain longer in the last tree than anywhere while passing through the woods. A late Black-poll once joined a passing flock of Robins but they were going west and the warbler soon turned to the south. All

warblers seem to me somewhat indifferent to cold, but snow inspires alarm even in the latest, and a general rapid southward movement—the Myrtle excepted. They care nothing for the snow in spring if the mercury is above freezing and the food supply not affected. The only Blue-winged Warbler seen this year was located by its song and in a blinding snow storm early in May. I also followed and watched five other species during that storm and they totally disregarded it. Of the warblers noted October 14, three species were passing more than a month later than the bulk of their kind. In a measure, this is owing to early species getting into flocks of later kinds and being influenced by them. Another apparent reason is the reluctance of some adult birds to leave their summer quarters. A few adult male Yellow Warblers remain here at least two weeks after the last young bird has departed but, as the last of certain northern species may be represented by either or both adult and young, it would seem as if some of the lingering adults influenced a few juveniles to remain with them and sometimes left the trusting youngsters far in the rear in the wild panic to flee the country.

Satisfactory data, relative to the general distribution of autumn warblers, can only be acquired by the liberal use of a gun. Little reliance can be placed in field-glass observation and I doubt if anyone, familiar with the family, is willing to accept such records as positive in unusual cases, as when birds are exceptionally early, late or rare. Of course the adult males of a few species can be identified with certainty and a bird student, with enough knowledge to have any business in the field, should know the Myrtle in all plumages but he can get no accurate idea of the number of species in his neighborhood, their rel-

ative abundance, etc. In just one autumn I established a better knowledge of the warblers here than other parties in fifteen years of field-glass observation. I mention this because my admission in a previous paper, of having taken specimens aroused the indignation of a certain class and appealing letters were sent to the state game warden and others. I was a born lover of birds and have always taken an interest in their welfare, but when it becomes necessary to secure them in order to do certain work well, I feel justified in doing so. However, discussion is futile but the above class should know that birds will be taken for some time to come. Probably the most effective method of determining routes is "bird tagging," and sooner or later a society will be organized to take up this work, and effective results will depend almost entirely on birds secured; furthermore, much material is at present required to permanently establish the subspecies and define their ranges. It is true that some disapprove of this "hair splitting" but for no good reason that I can see, except they are not interested in the subject or know nothing in regard to it. However, in this, as in other branches, you cannot suppress the taste for knowledge and it is better to work out the problem soon as possible than allow it to drag along with forms accepted and then rejected as in the past. In his great work, 'The Birds of Middle and North America,' Prof. Ridgway laments the lack of material not only in the foregoing connection but even in establishing plumage variations of actual species. Without further illustrating the necessity of securing the birds at the present time suppose we look into the future centuries and we find a subject of great interest requiring a mass of new material. I refer to differentiation or modification. In order

to decrease the mortality I used a field-glass as much as possible. It was very useful when warblers were near the ground or in trees to the height of about thirty feet, if the birds possessed distinctive under markings. However, it was practically useless at that height against strong light or after sundown, and very uncertain at times when the birds were in the tall tree tops. To accomplish good results in warbler hunting requires hard work and much patience. At times the woods are apparently void of warblers, but experience has taught me that, at least, a few may be found in every suitable woods. This scarcity may occur in the height of the season and is probably due to drainage by a flock of travelers. If you keep constantly in motion and attend strictly to business the reward is certain, although the amount of success depends on how familiar you are with the woods or, rather, the more favorable places. The terrestrial kinds are not difficult to discover, as you can penetrate their haunts and force them from cover, but the more aboreal species can not be reached in the thick foliage of the forest trees. One of my first experiments was to climb a tree, commanding a view on all sides, and wait for the birds, but in this I was depending entirely on such as chanced in one little spot of a large woods, and even then they were more difficult to see than when looking from the ground, while it was no easy matter to mark down anything shot, and if wounded it was sure to escape before I could reach the spot. I have seen a winged Nashville and Tennessee crawl entirely out of sight beneath a dead leaf when other concealment was wanting. Another of my errors was wasting time in exploring unlikely and out of the way places, believing such localities the most liable to contain rarities. Another point,

to be remembered, is that loud noises inspire alarm and the birds flee at the report of a gun; so by the time you have picked up your specimen the remainder have vanished from sight and hearing. Never shoot into a flock without first ascertaining their direction of travel and you can then sprint one or two hundred yards and get some trace of them again. In the woods the migrating flocks are usually of many species and the beginner is liable to see only the prominent kinds. Sometimes a small company of three or four individuals will work through the woods so much scattered that there will be a hundred yards or so between each bird. They remain silent, except for flying from tree to tree when a sharp peep is uttered to keep in touch with one another. In a case of this kind success depends on quick work and some experience. It does not pay to watch the water holes, as migrating warblers will seldom come down to drink and bathe. A notable fact is that the success of aboreal warblers in eluding detection is in no way due to wariness or sagacity. They feel absolutely safe in the tree tops and are totally indifferent to what transpires on the ground beneath. The cause is protective coloration and food habits that keep them among the slender twigs and leaves. Of this type is the Tennessee. On windy days they are practically safe among the agitated leaves but are betrayed in calm weather by their natural activity. As another type the Black and White may be mentioned. They spend much time about the tree trunks and large limbs and can not be overlooked. A mounted owl would make an excellent decoy.

In number of species the *Mniotiltidae* surpass all other families here, and rank second in abundance of individuals. During 1906 I noted thirty species, or six in excess of the Frin-

gillidæ. The following data refer to Ecorse Township, Wayne Co., Michigan, and the summer and autumn of 1906, except as otherwise stated.

Warblers seen in spring but absent in fall were: Blue-winged (*Helminthophila pinus*), Orange-crowned (*Helminthophila celata*), Louisiana Water Thrush (*Seiurus motacilla*), Kentucky (*Geothlypis formosa*), Mourning (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) and Wilson's (*Wilsonia pusilla*)—all the best possible for identification.

In preparing the following list I have included a few birds with haunts so similar to the warblers that they were constantly under notice.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*).—One noted Sept. 15. Exceptionally common in September, 1905.

Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*).—More common than any other season in my recollection. Absent in autumn of 1905. Secured a male January 11, 1891, which is the only winter record here I am aware of.

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*).—Abundant until Sept. 15; then rare and last seen Sept. 30. Common in 1905, and the last seen were secured Oct. 12 and 15.

Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*).—Absent, but noted in spring of 1906 and Sept. 3, 5, 10 and 24, 1905.

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*).—No autumn records in three years in this portion of Ecorse Twp. Common in spring.

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*).—Common, inclusive of Sept. 5, and last seen on the 7th; most abundant the last week in August.

(To be continued.)

#### Editor's Note.

Apropos of Mr. Wood's statements regarding the necessity of using the gun, would say: The Assistant State

Zoologist of New York State, complained to me last year of the impossibility of using many otherwise valuable records because they had not been so authenticated, mainly as a result of the refusal of the State Game Commission to grant the permits as provided by law. The Bird Glass seldom meets the requirements of Science.

#### The Nesting of the Hermit Thrush.

The Hermit Thrush, *Hylocichla aonalaschke pallasii*, Cab., is an abundant migrant and a not uncommon breeding species in Fulton county. In the Spring migrations, the birds pass north all through April and the early part of May, and in the Fall, return in September, October, or very early in November. In the migrations, the birds frequent pine thickets, dense shrubbery and such similar locations. They may often be surprised when on the ground, when they fly up into a nearby tree. Here, while sitting on a low limb, they may be easily recognized by the peculiar flirting of the tail at short intervals, and by the harsh, guttural note, much resembling that of a red-winged black-bird.

The nest, according to most ornithologists, is built on the ground, or near it in thick shrubbery, although Wilson once found a nest saddled onto the limb of a tree. In my experience the nest is always placed on the ground, under a low bush or plant. It is pretty certain that the bird has at least two broods a season. On July 6, 1907, Harry Clute and I found a nest just ready for the eggs. On July 8, 1907, another nest containing three eggs with incubation barely commenced. The latter nest was found at Woodworth's Lake, placed on the ground, by the side of a woodland trail. It was composed of dried leaves, weed stalks, etc., rather finely lined with pine needles, and com-

pletely protected by tall weeds. It offers the following dimensions: Internal breadth, 3 in.; external breadth, 5 in.; internal depth,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in.; external depth,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. Eggs, three in number, ovate, fine in texture, and very pale blue in color. They measure respectively: (1), .91 x .68; (2), .92 x .69; (3), .92 x .68 in. The birds were very bold and were constantly observed while the above notes were being taken. This set is now in the State Museum at Albany, N. Y.

C. P. ALEXANDER.

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My dear Mr. Short:—

In your editorial comments at the foot of my Long-billed Marsh Wren's paper in the September, '06, number of the "Oologist," you stated that the white eggs of *C. stellaris* are easily distinguished from albino ones of *T. palustris*, but failed to mention the differences between them.

If you will kindly describe the differences between these eggs as regards your experience with them in a subsequent issue of the "Oologist," you will confer a blessing and impart a knowledge on the subject to many ornithologists of this city, as well, no doubt, of other localities. There are several sets of marsh wren's eggs in the cabinets of collectors here, but as they unfortunately failed to observe the bird they are in doubt as to whether they are albinos of *palustris* or eggs of *stellaris*. Your assertion that you never heard of a purely albino set of the former species, and which Mr. J. Warren Jacobs also tells me he has never seen one, compels me to write to you after more definite data on the subject. Some collectors finding a pure white set of marsh wren's eggs in a marsh inhabited by *T. palustris* take it for granted that they are albinos of this species and

never wait to see the bird, when in fact, they are those of *C. stellaris*. This I've known to occur twice here.

Hoping you will bring out the differences between albinos of *T. palustris* and normal eggs of *C. stellaris* strongly in the "Oologist," and thanking you in advance for any trouble or inconvenience I am putting you to, I am yours truly.

RICHARD F. MILLER.

Editorial Note.—Sorry that the pressure of other business brought about a temporary burial of this matter. All the Albino sets of Long-bill Marsh Wren I have seen, exhibited a more or less pronounced lilac or lavender tinge and the eggs were more slender or narrow ovate. Those of the Short-bill are absolutely pure glossy white and my sets have always shown up short, broad ovate eggs. Again the nests of the Short-bill are usually further from the water, often in bordering meadows at some distance from actual open water, and of finer materials, usually more fine grasses and less of coarse flag leaves. As a rule closer to the ground and more carefully concealed.

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Salem, N. J.

Noticing your short article on Passenger Pigeons, of recent issue of the Oologist, I have a few notes that would probably be of interest. I have never seen a live Passenger Pigeon in this locality, but have two eggs that were collected in Potter Co., Pa., for F. T. Pember by A. Lyon, May 3, 1878. He says in his data the nest contained two eggs and was placed in the fork of a black birch limb, 20 feet high. Dimensions of nest: Outside diameter, 7 in.; inside diameter, 5 in. Birds were seen, and incubation begun; and only a few pairs breeding. I can say the eggs are creamy white

and are blown with two holes in the bottom. I do not think they are quite as large as a pigeon's egg. This set came from the late Professor Gentry's collection, of Philadelphia, Pa.

WM. B. CRISPIN.

### Robin's Eggs Eaten.

There was a Robin's nest with three eggs in it in a sugar maple. One morning I looked out of the window and saw a small boar trying to climb up to the nest, but when he would get nearly up to the nest, he would get so exhausted that he would have to slide down. The Robin knowing that the eggs would be taken came to the nest and ate the eggs, shell and all.

Yours truly,

HERBERT LYTLE,

Idlewood, Pa.

### Singular Nesting Sites of the Fish Hawk or Osprey.

In Cape May county, N. J., the Fish Hawks (*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*) occasionally build their nests on telegraph poles along the railroads, where they attract much attention from the passengers of passing trains and visitors. As many as six telegraph poles a short distance above Cape May, have been occupied by as many pair of birds.

The incubating birds quietly sit on their nests, no matter how much noise is made by passing trains.

The experiment has been made to scare off these birds by fiercely blowing the whistle, but the birds paid no attention whatever, and appeared perfectly indifferent to the clatter and noise.

RICHARD F. MILLER,

Philadelphia, Pa.

### Peculiar Nesting of the Chat.

RICHARD C. HARLOW.

While going through a grove of young maples on June 3, 1906, on the lookout for all things Ornithological, I came upon a peculiar nest of the Yellow-breasted Chat.

Noticing a small, compact nest some 18 feet up in one of the saplings, I struck upon the slender trunk and was much surprised to see a Chat hurriedly disappear in the green foliage. On climbing to it, one typical egg was found. This was left and on my next visit, June 8th, the nest was empty, evidently having been despoiled by Crows. This is certainly peculiar nesting for this bird as all those familiar with its habits will observe.

On June 12, 1905, I found an Indigo Bird's nest in like situation, but only 12 feet up. This held 4 eggs. Both discovered at Oak Lane, Pa.

### REVIEW.

Land and Fresh Water Shells of Great Britain, by B. B. Woodward.

Published as Monograph XVII of Roger Williams Park Museum, Providence, R. I., by the Curator, C. Abbott Davis.

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Here is a record for Oologist: Saturday, Sept. 7th, 6 p. m., a pair of No. 262 Buff Br. Sandpiper taken on Susquehanna River, below Pittston, Pa. First record for Pennsylvania I know of. None mentioned in Warren's book, "Birds of Pennsylvania."

E. W. CAMPBELL.

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VOL. XXIV. No. 11.

ALBION, N. Y., NOV., 1907.

WHOLE No. 244

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 11.

ALBION, N. Y. Nov., 1907.

WHOLE NO. 244

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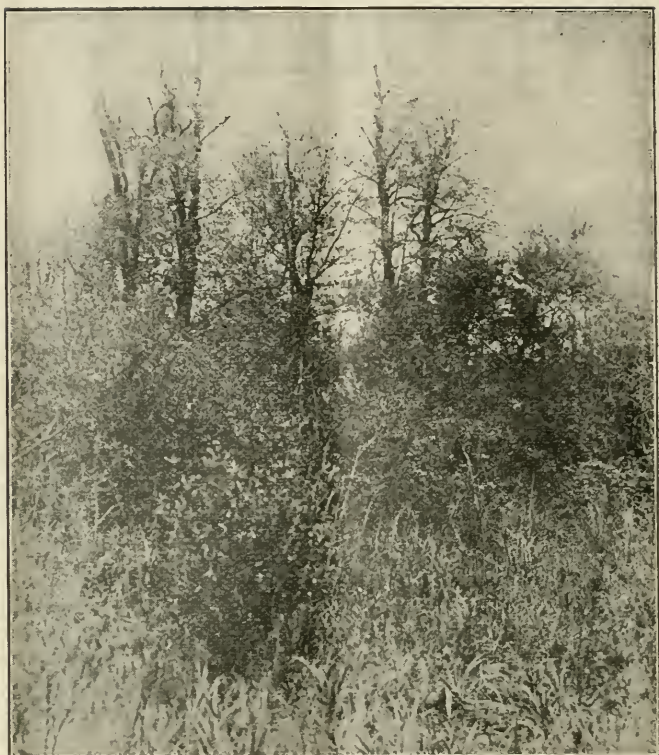
## Can Birds Distinguish Their Own Eggs.

In the August number of the "Oölogist" I noticed with much interest the paper by Mr. Burgess on a number of field experiments on birds, in regard to the power of the individual

to distinguish her eggs from those of another species. I have for years past been interested in this same subject and have noticed some very strong things in the power of some birds being able to tell the individual eggs and some birds that seemed to know no difference whatever in one egg from another.

We all know about the Cowbirds and the English Cuckoo's parasitic habit of depending upon the efforts of another species to hatch and bring up their young and how the Yellow Warbler will sometimes, when the Cowbird's egg is laid before her own, build a second nest above and attached to the first in order to get rid of the intruding egg, and at other times be able to kick it out of the nest rather than incubate it. This of course is a natural condition, with a bird when hatched all ready to be able to accept food given it by its foster parent. But the strange thing to me is why a bird in some species can neither distinguish weight, shape or color, as is very well shown by the experiments of Mr. Burgess.

This year I tried putting two robins (*merula migratoria*) in a kingbird's (*tyrannus tyrannus*) nest which already had two eggs. This as may be seen a case of a tyrannidae hatching eggs of a species of turdidae, two widely separated species. The kingbird flew back to the nest in a few moments and without noticing the changed color and the nest being more filled with eggs settled down and began to incubate apparently perfectly contented.



A few days later I investigated the nest and found the bird still setting on two of her own and two robins' eggs never having laid any more eggs; thus apparently showing that the bird had some control over laying and had found that she had all the eggs that she could cover.

I again looked up my bird and found two young birds of both species, but the robins were a very thin looking pair of birds. Three days after this the birds were found dead. Now in my mind the kingbird was not able to feed them in the right way and not that she was able to tell that they were not of her own kind. For if she could have told this how is it that she could not tell blue from

brown spots on a white background.

Besides the kingbird I tried changing eggs with two warblers; two closely allied species.

On June 18th I found the nest of a black and white warbler (*minioltita varia*) with four fresh eggs as shown in the accompanying picture. Near this nest I found another nest belonging to a pair of yellow warblers (*dendroica aestiva*) which also contained four fresh eggs. After photographing the nest of the former I took the eggs and replaced them with the yellow warblers and then stepped back to watch the affect.

In a few moment sthe bird came back, went deliberately to the nest looked at the eggs hopped in, and

after nestling down on them remained perfectly quiet, never having noticed any change whatever. Her whole manner was that of a bird in perfectly confidence, not in the least shy or suspicious of any change whatever; her first glance to see if the eggs were there was enough to place her at ease. She continued to set on the eggs till within a few days of their hatching, when some animal, possibly a skunk, broke up the nest.

In the case of Hawks and screech owls, the hawks in particular, I am not sure that they can either distinguish color, size or their own egg. I have tried them in a number of ways even having had Red-shouldered hawks hatch, but not rear, eggs of a totally different species.

Now these cases are instances of where the birds do not know their eggs or those of another color, but let us pass on to the Canada goose.

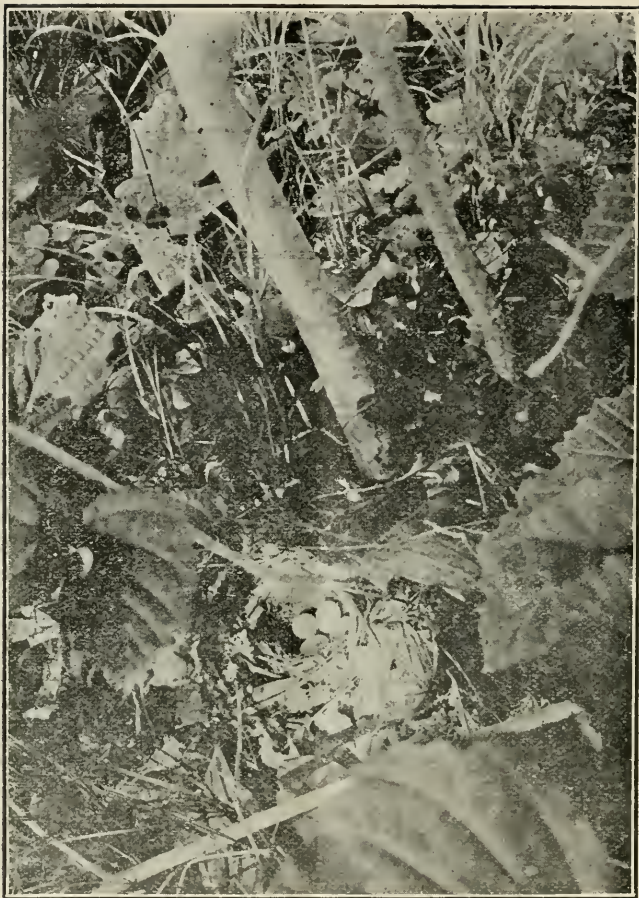
A few years ago I had several pairs of Canada geese (*branta canadensis*) in captivity, some of them being birds wingtipped and caught, the rest were raised in captivity. Every year while I kept these birds I had very good chances to watch them building their nests and hatching the young. These birds I am absolutely convinced knew not only their own goslings from the time they hatched but each egg. And what is more I could not come within a mile of fooling them on the goslings, and unless the egg was a good one they would not accept it and some times not even then.

For instance in the case of a young pair of birds that have never before laid, after building a nest and depositing one egg in it, they left it and the next day started another nest. This seemed strange to me and rather than loose the egg I put it in the new nest, and the bird laid her next egg in the first nest. I could not

understand why the birds did not want this egg, but decided rather than bother them again I would put it under a hen. This was done, but after two weeks incubation the egg was found to be infertile. The same bird laid five other eggs in the original nest and hatched them all. Now she knew that that egg was no good and knew it well enough not to be fooled by seeing it in another nest; yet this egg to me looked the same as any other unsoiled goose egg.

In one other case with the geese I had reason to want to mix three eggs among another setting so as to have the geese rear them rather than a hen. I marked the eggs with a lead pencil line so that I could tell them in case the birds should push any of the nine eggs out of the nest and also to be sure as to which eggs the birds would reject, if any.

After having placed them in the nest I went off some distance and waited with a pair of glasses for developments. It was not long before the goose came back to resume her duties of incubation. She stopped when close to the nest and gave it a good look and then leaned over and began gently poking at the eggs with her beak, and so far as I could see she was trying to work out the foreign egg and not her own. But it might have been that she was merely arranging them in new positions, it looked to me very much as though she knew something was wrong. The nest happened to be an unusually deep one, having been built in a depression in the ground, so she was unable to roll out any of the eggs even though she wished to and after working sometime on them she nestled down and finally hatched eight goslings. In this case the old bird certainly knew that something was not right, possibly that there



were too many eggs but it certainly appeared as though she knew her eggs from the strangers.

In regard to this matter of a bird knowing its own eggs it would be of great interest to me and without doubt to Mr. Burgess to hear from some of the bird men who have murre and other bird colonies near at hand as to whether these birds can tell their eggs or if they merely sit on any one's egg that by chance has not been claimed.

L. Brooks, Boston, Mass.

#### AUTUMN WARBLER MIGRATION.

Extracts From a Reprint of an Article in the "Auk" for July, '07, by Permission of the Author.

BY J. CLAIRE WOOD.

(Continued from last number.)

**Blue-Headed Vireo** (*Vireo solitarius*).—One adult male Oct. 9. First seen in 1905 on Sept. 28 and common that date and on Oct. 5. Last seen Oct. 8—one specimen.

**Black and White Warbler** (*Mniotilta varia*).—Less common than usual;

not more than five seen in one day and usually one or two. Only adult male Sept. 15, but adult males are always rare in autumn. October birds have all been adult and junior females.

**Golden-Winged Warbler** (*Helminthophila chrysoptera*).—Last seen August 26, one bird. This was a male but whether adult or junior is uncertain as it was not secured. Last seen August 20, 1905—a fine adult male.

**Yellow Warbler** (*Dendroica aestiva*).—Last seen August 17—an adult male. Six noted August 12, appeared to be adult males. Last seen in 1905 August 19. That season I gave the species especial attention and secured questionable birds—all adult males however, from and inclusive of July 30.

**Cerulean Warbler** (*Dendroica cerulea*).—Last seen August 26—an adult male. Last seen August 24, 1905—twenty specimens (being adults and juniors of both sexes but mainly the latter).

**Chestnut-Sided Warbler** (*Dendroica pensylvanica*).—One specimen Sept. 3 and one Sept. 23—both junior males. Last seen Sept. 3, 1905—fifteen noted and all junior birds, the two secured being males.

**Ovenbird** (*Seiurus aurocapillus*).—Not taken after Sept. 5 and nothing known as to age and sex of the later birds. Not taken in 1905 though common.

**Northern Yellow-Throat** (*Geothlypis trichas brachidactyla*).—Have taken no adult males after mid-September and the very latest have been junior females.

**Yellow-Breasted Chat** (*Icteria virens*).—Last seen July 29—an adult female in Grosse Pointe Township. Undoubtedly occurred later but this was my last visit to that locality. More common in Gratiot Township

where at least six pairs nested in 1906.

**American Redstart** (*Setophaga ruticilla*).—Last seen Oct. 7—a junior bird. The three noted Sept. 3 were adult males. Last seen in 1905 was an adult male Oct. 5, and in 1904 two adult males Oct. 2. Adult males are not common during September.

**Nashville Warbler** (*Helminthophila rubricapilla*).—Five birds were noted, all adults, the Sept. 23 specimen being a female and the remainder males. Absent in autumn of 1905.

**Tennessee Warbler** (*Helminthophila peregrina*).—The most common species Sept. 5 to 15, and the first in total number of individuals for the season. Met with every day afield until Oct. 19. The Sept. 3 and 5 birds were mainly adults but the junior birds took the lead from Sept. 7 to October. The two Oct. 14 specimens were adult male and junior female. More abundant than in 1905 and absent in 1904.

**Western Parula Warbler** (*Comptosia typica americana ramalinae*).—Three birds noted and all adults, the Oct. 7 specimen being a male and the remainder females.

**Cape May Warbler** (*Dendroica tigrina*).—All adult birds except two junior females, one secured Sept. 3 and the other Sept. 20. This is the first time I have met with the species here. They ranked seventh in total number of individuals for the season.

**Black-Throated Blue Warbler** (*Dendroica caerulescens*).—First noted Sept. 3—an adult male and female. From Sept. 5 to Oct. 14, both inclusive, there was a mixture of both sexes and ages. The Oct. 23 bird was a junior female. Fourth in total number of individuals for the season.

**Myrtle Warbler** (*Dendroica maculosa*).—Not enough taken to judge proportion of age and sex to dates. Sec-

ond in total number of individuals for the season. Much less abundant than, in 1905 and departed earlier. Mr. Edward Arnold informs me he has seen this species in January near Battle Creek, Michigan.

**Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica maculosa*).**—The junior birds first appeared Sept. 3 and the adults on the 15. The three Sept. 30 birds were two adults and one junior—sexes not known. Sixth in total number of individuals for the season.

**Bay-Breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*).**—All junior birds and an equal number of each sex.

**Black-Poll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*).**—The most common species Sept. 3, and third in total number of individuals for the season. Mixed adults and juniors throughout September. All the October birds were adults, mostly males, but the last specimen was a female. There is no authentic record of this species occurring here in spring but I saw that was probably a small flock May 30, 1905.

**Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica blackburniae*).**—Eight birds noted in all, the only adult being the Oct. 9 bird; this was a male.

**Black-Throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*).**—First noted September 9, an adult female; then a mixture of both sexes and ages inclusive of Oct. 9. The two of Oct. 14 were adult females and the Oct 21 bird was not secured. Fifth in total number of individuals for the season.

**Palm Warbler (*Dendroica palmarum*).**—One specimen, an adult female Oct. 7.

**Water Thrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*).**—Birds secured were of both sexes but ages uncertain.

**Connecticut Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*).**—The two birds noted

were adults. Absent in spring but taken spring and autumn of 1905.

**Canadian Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*).**—One of the August 26 birds was an adult male, the first in autumn for three years.

The following list gives the date of the last summer residents and the number seen; also first and last date, with the number seen of the transient species, together with date of greatest abundance and the number; also everything noted in October. A\* indicates that one or more were taken on the date to which it is prefixed.

#### THE QUAIL TRAP.

Our Hello Birds—Whippoorwill Lodge  
—Red Ruff's Family—Rise and  
Fall of Bcbwhite—Some Songs  
and Some Singers.

(Norwich, Conn., Bulletin.)

The Quail Trap, June 26, 1907.—The English neighborhood was put in 'phonic connection with the rest of the world this week, and the local birds were quick to take advantage of the equipment. Our thrashers, finches and larks sing from it; it is the favorite hunting stand for kingbirds, and nowhere else can our three kinds of swallows be seen so wholly at rest. Now only the parent swallow are on the wires, but in two weeks there will be families of six and eight, and in two months, endless lines of hirundines will herald the fall migration.

In holes and crevices below the insulators, in old telegraph poles, I have found breeding sparrowhawks, wacups, downies, bluebirds, robins, kingbirds, and many white-bellied swallows. Before the pole was sunk here the holes were left uncovered several days, and trapped many frogs and toads and a few young birds. Before the current was turned on two

woodcock were picked up under our wires. In former years I have eaten a dozen woodcock out of season, picked up by teamsters and farmers under electrical network, and not half the woodcock killed in this way are ever found. These fatalities should strengthen the argument in favor of underground wires.

With more reason than most whip-poorwill lodges, our bungalow could be named, after the weird bird of the gloaming. Promptly at 8 p. m. the birds begin berating each other from the north, east and south. We note no difference in the voices of individuals; distance only makes any change in modulation or volume. On the morning of June 15 one began calling at 2 o'clock from our geranium rookery, and till the big cuckoo clock chimed 3 he never for a second stopped his clamor. As often and as regularly as the pendulum swung, and with as little change, this bird incessantly called, and then for fifteen minutes had a duet with a rival back of the cattery. Then as the sun rose, thrashers sang the music of the spheres. The next evening a pair of mating whips dashed into the face of Mrs. Rawson at the cottage door; but now the entire veranda is securely screened in, so that we cannot be troubled by day-flyers, duck-stingers and Birds That Pass in The Night. I have found but two pairs of whip-poorwills' eggs in the last seven years—one back of the cattery here, and one as early as June 3, at Whip-poorwill ledge, on Plain Hill, Norwich. The marbleized eggs are on the bare leaves with no depression, and the sitting female cannot be distinguished from the surroundings. We often see the males, however, perched lengthwise on limbs of trees, but not till this summer have we started

them from walls in the sunny open fields. There are very few night-hawks in the neighborhood, and but one unmated "mosquito-hawk" on our farm.

An excellent set of sixteen ruffed grouse eggs was found by a lineman cutting poles for our new telephone. I have not seen so large a set, but Junius A. Brand found a set of 16 in Rockwell's woods. The many clutches run across by Thomas Trumbull and myself when hawking, ranged from 11 to 14. The neighborhood teacher took her scholars over to Whip-poorwill ledges in our woods on Flag day, and had an experience seldom enjoyed by school children a-birding. They surprised an old partridge with her unfledged brood, and they picked up for a moment and then faced one or two of the tiny chicken pets. The old hen charged the boy as she did us in the same woods a few days before. Only in this last case the mother was bold enough to face an entire school.

Two bobwhites were shot from a covey below the village last fall, but by the intervention of the farmer the rest of the covey was saved and wintered nicely with little attention. This and the depleted covey on our farm are the only bunches of quail where there used to be one hundred coveys before the annihilating winter of four years ago. In those golden days before the blizzard the large Snow farm between North and South Woodstock appeared to be the center of quaildom hereabouts. Twenty nests of bobwhite in one season is the record for this farm—one nest holding 20 eggs. On our own farm that year were three quails' nests within six rods of the back door. Cats caught the mother quail off her nest near the barnyard of the Snow place, and cats caught

the quail which once ventured to nest on the lawn of the Brand place in Norwich.

There should be a whole bird-world of squabs in mid-June; but is a week gone and no wailing of baby orioles in the elmtops, redwings have incomplete sets of eggs, and many thrashers in full song have just begun to build. Four kinds of warblers, who usually have full sets June 4th, are still covering eggs, phoebes have not hatched, and quail and goldfinches have not paired. Bobolinks are strangely silent, and we do not know whether it is the quiet incident to breeding or due to some mortality. The May frosts killed many tanagers and orioles. Mrs. Foster Child picked up here several stiff and stark female orioles. The field corn is a fortnight behindhand and crows have more thoroughly robbed the nests on our preserve. I saw them at two robins' nests in the orchard early this morning. They managed to spy out and destroy an exquisitely marked set of five thrasher's eggs well hidden on the ground in a thicket of hawthorn and red osier.

The variation in the voices of our birds at home is more noticeable than usual this year. We see no variety in the singing of grosbeaks, tanagers, indigos, catbirds, robins and purple finches—one scorebook answers for all. But no two of our brown thrashers present the same song, and there is a wide difference in the music of the bungalow song sparrows. We have one midday singing thrasher in the north meadow with so long a repertory we ought not to class him with other common performers. Nearer home, we have another still greater brown thrush with a 'cello voice of good range, flexible, and with a throat full of original trills. He entertains us in the morning from an apple tree near the cottage, and at evening in the shrubbery he thrills us from a sassafras tree. The Friendship Catbird—has deceived me by the resemblance to the veery's song. The strange crack or rattle of the blue jays on Broadway. I

have before referred to the wild mockingbird which far excelled its rivals at Pinehurst. And still the palm must be given to the caged St. Augustine mocker cheaply priced at \$500 which can outsing Italia's night-ingales or the bulbuls of the Orient.

C. L. RAWSON.

#### Review.

Report of New Jersey State Museum, Cloth, Illustrate, 1906.

Contains besides the regular museum report, "The Amphibians and Reptiles of New Jersey," by Fowler, covering Salamanders, Snakes, Toads, Frogs, Lizards and Turtles, and also a supplement to the 1905 report on Fishes of New Jersey by same author. In addition to the numerous text cuts there are 122 fine page plates.

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VOL. XXIV. No. 12.

ALBION, N. Y., DEC., 1907.

WHOLE No. 245

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# THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIV. No. 12.

ALBION, N. Y. DEC., 1907.

WHOLE No. 245

## THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to  
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-  
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,  
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,  
Chill, Monroe Co., N. Y.

### Some 1906 Notes.

On May 5th, while up near Mayfield, northeast of Gloversville, I found a nest of the Migrant Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus migrans* (Was not this *excubitorides*?—Ed.) in a thorn-apple tree, 10 feet up. The nest

contained six fine eggs, which immediately attracted my attention because of their great size. Unfortunately the eggs were very far incubated and I only took two of them. These are typical of the Migrant Shrike, except for size, measuring 1.03 x .72 and 1.01 x .71 in. respectively. They are in the collection of the State Museum at Albany.

On June 2, I found a nest of the Nashville Warbler, *Helminthophila rubricapilla*. The nest was in a piece of low woodland on the ground and partially roofed over like an Ovenbird's. It was composed of pine needles, etc., lined with finer ones.

The eggs were four in number, two of which were accidentally broken. On all sides of the nest except the front was a semi-circular row of small maple shoots. The old birds were very shy and it took an hour's patient waiting to identify the species. The eggs were white in color, marked delicately at the larger end with reddish brown. They measured .60x.46 and .56x.44 in. respectively.

On June 3, I found a nest of the Black-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* and noticed that it contained two eggs. While over there the next day, I happened to look into the nest and was amazed to find four eggs. I am certain as to the above statements and have come to the conclusion that two birds must have had but one nest, although the eggs were indistinguishable from one another.

CHAS. P. ALEXANDER.  
Gloversville, N. Y.

E. H. Short:—

Dear Sir:—On Oct. 7th of this year I found a nest of three young Goldfinches nearly ready to fly. The nest was in a cypress about six feet up: Is not this an unusual date?

AVAN ROSSEM.

Ans.—It would be in the East. Let us hear from other Western collectors.

Editor Oologist:—

Dear Sir:—I was interested to note the comparative measurements of eggs of the Great Blue Heron from different sections of the country, by Mr. Thompson in the September Oologist. It seems to me that if those who possess eggs of any of the widely distributed species would submit the measurements to the Oologist for publication, whenever those measurements are unusual, that there might thus be brought to light much interesting and instructive data.

I note in the measurements referred to above, that the eggs from Maine are much more elongated than any others. I have a set of two eggs of the Bald Eagle taken in Maine, which are very unusual in the same way, measuring: 3.20 x 2.27 and 3.04 x 2.21 in. If it is a general tendency for eggs of a species to more elongate in one section than in another, it would be of interest to know the fact and to search for the reason.

B. G. WILLARD,  
Millis, Mass.

---

### A Morning's Egg Hunt.

Sunday morning, June 16th, this past spring was just about the right time to look up the warblers and smaller breeders, as they were all a couple of weeks later than usual. I was up at daylight and was soon hustling up the river road for the mouth

of a large mountain stream. Birds were singing everywhere along the mountain side and among others I heard several mourning warblers, but did not stop, and the only nests noted were several catbirds and robins. Arriving at the turning in point, I was soon walking on an old log road and then I slowed up and began to look for nests. The valley of this stream and surrounding mountains is wild land and uninhabited. In the valley for about 5 miles is a heavy and almost continuous growth of rhododendron or buck laurel. For several miles the timber is heavy and is made up in a great part of hemlock and some pine. Many big boulders lie scattered about and the ground is carpeted with deep moss and beautiful ferns. In this region and similar places hereabouts when the conditions are so canadian, many of the more northern breeders find a summer home and such northern mammals as the varying hare or white rabbit, porcupine, woodland jumping mouse still flourish.

It was a beautiful day, clear and cool, and birds were singing everywhere. I started in and went slow, and after the trip was ended I concluded it was one of the best trips I ever had. Going but a short distance a pair of juncos became greatly excited. The cause I soon found was a nestful of five eggs under the edge of the bank along the road. Very soon I spotted a Magnolia warbler's nest in the top of a little bunch of hemlock about five feet up. It held three eggs, which I left for a full set. Stopping to drink from a clear, cold spring, I noticed another Magnolia's nest situated about the same and containing one egg. Farther up where the timber was heavy and the ground damp and shady I noticed way out on the edge of a long drooping hemlock limb and directly over the stream a

vireo sitting on her nest. It was about 20 feet from the ground so I shinned up a birch that grew just within about 10 feet of the nest and as soon as I got a little above the nest I found as I expected a solitary vireo at home. Descending, I cut a pole, fastened a fork stick on the end for a hook, and again ascending, I pulled the limb over and safely landed the nest. In a laurel swamp where the timber was open I heard a yellow-bellied flycatcher, but it was a nasty place, so I wasted no time. The yellow-belly is very rare in summer, but probably breeds. For a mile further I tramped up an old tramway finding another Magnolia nest with an incomplete set, and then I arrived at a slashing well studded with scattering hemlocks and huge dead stubs. Here on the 10th I had heard the loud call of an olive-sided flycatcher. I heard both birds this time, and soon found them perched on big stubs. I watched for over an hour but they showed no signs of nest building, so I concluded the nest must already be finished, and that I might as well wait a week until the old bird commenced to set. In June, 1904, I located a pair and after lots of watching I found and secured the nest and 3 eggs, which as near as I can find is the only record for Western Pennsylvania. The bird is rare, but I have probably seen more of this bird and more specimens in Pennsylvania than any collector in the state. While watching the flycatchers, I saw plenty of birds. I noticed two birds making regular trips to a small beech among the hemlocks. Going over, I found a nest of solitary vireos building. For some reason this nest was never finished.

Saw a yellow-bellied woodpecker feeding its young high up in an old stub, and quite low in another was a flicker's nest, also full of young.

Mourning and chestnut-sided warblers also yellow-throats were very much in evidence, but after thrashing about for a short time amongst the briars and brush I quit them. Also noticed red-tail and red-shouldered hawks, besides many commoner birds.

Starting to cross the stream I saw a good big trout, possibly a foot long, and while sizing him up I noticed a winter wren's nest under the end of a rotten moss-covered log that stuck out over the bank. It was, of course, too late for this, as the young had already left.

Starting up the mountain, I found a Magnolia's nest just finished. In a heavy patch of mountain laurel I found a beautiful nest of the black-throated blue warbler, containing 3 eggs, which I left. Coming out on a point on the opposite side of the mountain I found a Magnolia at home on four fresh eggs. There was quite a bed of low thick laurel on this point and I hunted it over thoroughly with the result that I found two handsome sets of four each of b.-t. blues, also four or five old nests showing this to be a favorite place.

A couple of male Blackburnians were singing at this place but I could find no nest. However, on my trip the following Sunday I did find a nest from which a couple of days later I secured a heavily marked set of four. I visited the nest from which on May 26th I got the handsome set of sharpshin hawks. As there was no signs of the old birds about I took the nest along to go with the eggs. Besides the warblers mentioned I saw several water thrushes and black and whites, a few redstarts, quite a number of Canadians and black-throated green and a few hooded; oven-birds, and parulas were common.

1906.		July 29	August 17	August 19	August 26	Sept. 3	Sept. 5	Sept. 9	Sept. 15	Sept. 23	Sept. 30	Oct. 7	Oct. 9	Oct. 14	Oct. 19	Oct. 21	Oct. 23	Oct. 28	Oct. 29	Most Abundant.	No. Seen.
Nashville Warbler						*2		*1				*1	*1	*1						Sept. 9	*75
Tennessee Warbler											*12	*5	*3	*2						Sept. 30	*12
Western Parula Warbler						*2						*1	*1	*1						Oct. 9	*18
Cape May Warbler						*2											*1	2	1	Oct. 7	*75
Black-throated Blue Warbler																				Sept. 13	*7
Myrtle Warbler						*1														Sept. 13	*5
Magnolia Warbler						*1														Sept. 3	*75
Bay-breasted Warbler						*75														Sept. 3	*4
Black-poll Warbler																				August 26	*15
Blackburnian Warbler																				Sept. 23	*1
Black-throated Green Warbler																				Oct. 7	*1
Palm Warbler																				Sept. 5	*4
Water Thrush																				Sept. 5	*2
Connecticut Warbler																				August 26	*2
Canadian Warbler																					
Black and White Warbler		1		1																	
Golden-winged Warbler		*2																			
Yellow Warbler					1							1	1								
Cerulean Warbler		1			1																
Chestnut-sided Warbler																					
Ovenbird																					
Northern Yellow-throat																					
Yellow-breasted Chat																					
American Redstart		*1																			
Summer Residents																					

This table is a continuation of "Autumn Warbler Hunting" which was omitted from last issue by an oversight.

### THE QUAIL TRAP. From Connecticut.

---

The Quail Trap, Oct. 23, 1907—No, we were not awheel during the spring migration, or in the early summer, nor is the tonneau of a motor car at any season an ideal place to observe the movements of birds. And night flyers rarely flew into the forward glare of our acetylene. Moving lights so close to bushless unturfed roadway do not appear to attract journeying birds like the tall mariner's lanterns along the coast in direct lines of migration. But as the cars run more at night and go further afield, now and then a deer may be fascinated or charmed by the headlights. But this novel firelighting is not likely to become a fad at present. Several times we have seen rabbits and skunks run under the car on moonlight nights.

In running at half speed from York Beach, Maine, along most of the beaches in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut and all along the south shore of Long Island, we saw about the usual number of small beach-birds, gulls, surf ducks and common waders. Black-crowned nights and great blues were commonly noted, but no white herons. But this season six snowies stayed over night in the brackish pools on Groton Long Point in our own county. Two eagles were seen fishing for flotsam and jetsam at Hampton Beach. Earlier in the season, motoring to the war office, we narrowly missed surprising a fine whitebeak in the Boothbay barn lot—once the Dr. Sweet place—on Lebanon Green. Eagles of both species are so rare on Connecticut farms that they figure largely in the village chronicles. Their visits are too often welcomed with a charge of squirrel shot.

No sparrowhawks were seen during the last week's run and goshawks have not yet come down. But both goshawks and snowy owls will be seen by the sharp-eyed motorists along shore next month. Passing through Narragansett Pier twice, we were lucky enough to see part of the stray flight of hawks, all highfliers and not easily determined. The three buteos and one accipiter were among the few we saw on trees by the roadside. The southbound warblers did not seem to be partial to the asphalt and macadam, and we determined but six species from the machine.

We saw the famous Ipswich sparrow near Swampscott—or felt sure we did. In a fisherman's doorway was a large maple stump with twenty big and little holes drilled in it. Two of the flickers' holes could be reached from the ground, and in some of the upper holes I presume resident downies were in winter quarters. I would have given a tidy sum if I could transport that stump in sections to a place of honor in my cabinet. In East Woodstock I had permission to remove just such an apartment house of the carpenters (as the Cubans call them), but a high wind blew down and splintered my prize. Nowhere on the south shore of Long Island did we see one of the great assemblies of swallows such as I have repeatedly seen on the north side beyond Orient. While the Road Runner was rapidly skimming through Larchmont and New Rochelle, we saw two birds near at hand and a bunch a little way from the car which by the law of exclusion must have been startlings. These introduced birds are increasings along the Bay shore, not uncommon in New Haven, and have now appeared in Mystic and New London in our own

county. (See Bird Lore for September.)

The licensed gunners of the state would now form a grand army corps of 12,000 men. This may be a good school in case of war with Japan, but it means present death to bobwhite, this year's chicken hatch, and many an old "Biddy." Suppose all the Norwich noble 500 should "go" at once. But just suppose two-thirds, or only one-half of this home guard of woods. Imagine the noisy scene! It would belittle the War in Flanders or the confusion attending the famous Battle of the Frogs at Windham.

The law does not prescribe or limit the battery to be taken afield by the licensees. So presumably anything can be carried from a toy pistol and duck gun up to a Gatling cannon. And some gunners are coming near to a Gatling in the auto or pump gun, which, when turned loose on a big bunch of birds rising singly, does murderous work. As I write, eight reports in quick succession tell us that the auto-gun is at work in our woods, and I fear it means slaughter of the innocents. There is a family of grey squirrels feeding daily on the nuts of the famous hickory in the Boothby yard on Lebanon green, and the raiders are welcomed by the family. But who of the big Norwich contingent will be the first to shoot at the greys now living in the Little Plain on Broadway? We freed a pair there kindly given us by Mrs. Thurston Lillibridge. As I foretold, the country news-budgets weekly record the shooting of great horned and barred owls by the licensed shooters. This is a pity, when these owls keep down the vermin and red squirrels. Several great blue herons have also been killed, and in only one instance has this illegal act been punished.

A Woodcock came into the garden of B. P. Bishop on Broadway in Aug-

ust. I can recall the time when the late S. T. C. Merwin—the crack local of his day—used to get two or three woodcock every season near Appleton Meech's spring, now on the convent ground at the foot of Otis street. On Oct. 2 a Florida gallinule was killed by the wires on the Baltic road and brought in to me by Selectman Lillibridge. I have met this gallinule once on Fisher's Island, twice at Saybrook and sparingly on Long Island. The waterbirds of this county are not well written up and a chapter in their life histories could be added by Norwich observers. It would surprise many to know that last June both rail and marsh wrens were breeding within 10 minutes' walk of Franklin Square. Mr. Renno Blackstone found a full set of incubated eggs of Grebe right here at home. My own horned owls are faring finely in their roomy home near the Quail Trap. They relish their eight ounces of raw beef nightly and are lively and in full plumage. The heavy winter furring on their feet is like that of the Arctic owls whose advance guard is coming to us soon.

Of destroyers of bird life other than the self-styled sportsmen, there has been no lack at the Quail Trap this summer. I surprised two black snakes fighting over a nest of young redwings and Cyril Paine killed a five-foot racer with a female robin in its mouth. In our meadow full of redwings, few nests escaped rifling. Huge snapping turtles have been abundant this year and they get some birds. One foggy morning in August from the first car for Worcester out of Southbridge, I saw the motorman get several huge tortoises from the tracks, and he made an honest penny by selling the turtles to restaurants. Since my warning about the Italian aliens these gentry have not only been shooting on Sunday, shooting

without license and bagging small birds, but in Mystic Lyme, and other towns have been trying to kill the game wardens sent in the woods to arrest them.

C. L. RAWSON.

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The Great Grey Owl in Eastern New York.

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The Great Grey Owl, *Scotiaptex cinerea*, is a rare and somewhat irregular visitor in Eastern New York. E. H. Short does not include the species in his "Birds of Western New York," nor does R. Hoffman make mention of it in "Birds of New England and Eastern New York." There are two specimens on exhibition in the State Museum at Albany.

I have two records of the occurrence of this bird in Fulton county, New York. The first specimen was probably brought into the county by the heavy winds and severe snow-fall of Nov. 11, 1906. The bird was found dead along the car track near Broad-albin, on Nov. 15, '06, and was supposed to have been killed by contact with the train. I examined the bird the next day and made the following observations:

"L. 29.25 in.; extent, 59 in.; tail, 12.65 in.; bill, upper mandible, bright soap-yellow, except along tomia where it is ashy-white; lower mandible, greyish. Facial disc, light grey, with concentric, rather indistinct marks of blackish-brown, or black; a large dark mark at lower edge of disc on each side of bill. Under parts white heavily striped and streaked with dark blackish-brown; upper part of breast unmarked, whitish; above, brown, mottled with white." Sex, male; stomach empty.

A second specimen was brought into Hotaling's Taxidermist office on Dec. 16, 1906. This specimen was claimed to have been secured in the

northern part of Fulton county, (possibly over the line in Hamilton county), and is a female bird, slightly larger than the other with shorter alar extent (30.12 in. and 56 in.) respectively.

C. P. ALEXANDER.

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If your subscription has expired or expires with this number you will receive no more copies of The Oologist until we receive your renewal.

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We are sending bills this month to all who are in arrears. If your subscription expires with this issue you will find your wrapper so stamped.

BUS. MGR.

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In Review.

---

"American Birds," by Wm. L. Finley. Studies from life with the aid of the camera. 247 pages, 127 halftones from photos, cloth. Chas. Scribners' Sons.

This work seems typographically perfect and the contents are interesting from cover to cover. Mr. Finley mentions his indebtedness to Mr. Bohlman in the introduction and from the copyright marks on many plates, we judge that this was quite considerable.

Mr. Finley states in his introduction that "to the ordinary bird lover a robin, flicker, chickadee, etc. is the same," irrespective of whether eastern or western species. While almost all the contents of the book treat of western (Pacific coast) observations, he writes for the whole country on the above assumption.

Assuming this statement to be true, it is apparently another case where "the ordinary bird lover" has something to learn.

We read the first study in the book through carefully (Hummingbird Studies). The editor of the Oologist has no field acquaintance with Western Hummers, but he has had several opportunities to make pleasant and profitable visits to Mrs. Rubythroat of the Eastern U. S., while she was home-building and housekeeping, and in some respects his observations did not point to the same conclusions as Mr. Finley arrived at.

We have not found the Eastern bird selecting nesting sites with reference to protection from storms, as a rule. In other respects their habits appear to differ.

Again, on page 46, he speaks of it being a very rare occurrence for a bird to sing on the nest, and quotes Mr. Burroughs in support. Did either Mr. Finley or Mr. Burroughs ever make a close study of a pair of nesting warbling vireos?

As far as our observations go, every sitting bird of this species sings from its nest in early morn, to its mate, always in the near vicinity.

On page 11 he advances a theory in explanation of the apparent exile of the father Hummer during the rearing of the annual family that may be correct.

I might say much more. It is full of interest. Read it.

ERNEST H. SHORT.

To the Editor Oologist,

Dear Sir:—

Will you kindly tell me if possible what kind of bird makes a nest of grasses wrapped nicely with leaves with a very little hair inside, very deep about 5 or 6 inches, and very rough on the top, no pretention whatever to forming an edge as most birds do. The grasses stand straight up not formed around. Nest situated near stream in the ground. The eggs are pure white and about about size of Phoebe's and spotted with reddish brown near the larger end.

I found the nest but could not see the bird at all waited a long time. I

think it must be some kind of a warbler. Can you tell from my rather vague description.

Hoping you can assist me and thanking you in advance for any information I remain,

Yours sincerely,

H. P. B.  
Mass.

Would have to see the eggs. [Ed.]  
Toledo, O., Oct. 14.

Mr. Ernest H. Short,

Dear Sir:—

I wish to record the capture of a Willet (*sympnemis semipalmata*) by Mr. A. K. Secor and Mr. Wm. A. Ketcham, both well known business as well as sportsmen, at Cedar Point, Oct. 10, 1907. This is an extremely rare bird here; there is no record that I can find since 1880, although this is the third specimen that these gentlemen have taken; the others have not been preserved.

Your truly,

A. C. Read.

Ed. Oologist:—

Oct. 27, 1907, while out hunting, I saw an albino crow, which was feeding in a corn field in company with a common black fellow. The plumage was entirely white, with the exception of the tail feathers, which were marked with black. It was very shy and could not be approached.

W. W. Jr.,  
Oct. 1, '07. Kalamazoo, Mich.

#### EXPLANATORY.

In regard to our new Adv. Policy.

For the following reasons, while as stated in the "Oologist" Vol. XXI. No. 8, Aug., 1904; we have accepted such advertisements only on the understanding that the specimens were legally collected in accordance with the Game Laws of the State or County where collected and hence should be legally salable for the purposes stipulated in the right to collect, still we are informed that the Audubon Societies and some of the State Game Commissions object to any tendency toward these leaving the collectors hands as a commercial commodity, and they also claim, probably with some reason, that such advertisements may tend to encourage illegal collecting.

# NEW POLICY

## Subscribers, Advertisers

### —NOTICE—

FIRST. In line with the decision recently published by the "Condor" and for the same reasons, i e. That the provision for scientific collecting under the Song Bird Law did not contemplate commercial collecting.

The Publisher and Manager of this paper, the "Oologist," hereby announce that, beginning November last, they will, hereafter decline all advertisements or sale notices offering to buy or sell, N. American bird skins or eggs for cash except skins of game birds and birds of prey.

SECOND. Hereafter the "Oologist" will be sent only to subscribers whose subscriptions are fully paid in advance.

All premium offers except as printed in this issue or hereafter are hereby withdrawn. A statement of account to date will soon be sent all who are in arrears and those who have not settled in accordance with terms thereon by January 1st will be dropped.

**Canadian Subscribers Notice.** Owing to the increased Canadian postage, combination and premium offers will not apply to Canada subscriptions unless accompanied by 12 cents per year extra.

**F. H. LATTIN,**

**Publisher.**

**E. H. SHORT,**

**Manager.**

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**Albion. N. Y.**

Parties wishing to procure a copy of Capen's should address the above who will quote best price or advise where the same can be obtained—if obtainable. The few copies I possess are being distributed among my old "O. and O." friends at a nominal rate. F. H. L.



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